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Price per Copy Rs. 8/-

Editor : Dr. (Smt.) Sulochana Rajendran

Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.)

BOMBAY-400 022.

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AN 'AGNI PARIKSHA'

It was indeed a live 'Agni-Pariksha'. What revered Rajaji had once immortalised as a 'temple of music, by music and for music' was desecrated by a cruel Fate. A devastating fire on 28th February, 1990, completely gutted the auditorium and left an army of battered and twisted cushion chairs, a severely jolted acoustic system and a tortured aircondition apparatus. Even the Titanio cement concrete structure was not spared, though mercifully the damage was within reasonable limits. However, the quantum and effect of this damage would have to be carefully assessed by technical experts.

Shanmukhananda has been universally recognised as a unique monument of National Integration and Cultural Synthesis. It has been the pride of this country and certainly one of the finest rendezvous of the Performing Arts anywhere in the world.

The saga of Shanmukhananda is replete with events which are significant in the corridors of our own times, such as the last session of the All India Congress Committee when India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was present (1964) and the World Marathi Conference in August, 1989. The hall has reverberated to the unforgettable recital of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra led by the one and only Zubin Mehta. The immortal music of the world famous Yehudi Menuhin, the soulful outpourings of India's Nightingale Shrimati M. S. Subbulakshmi, the melodies which flowed from the Sitar and the Shehnai of the all time greats Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Bismillah Khan respectively,

the acme of enchantment provided by the sensitive and robust dance recitals of Balasaraswati and Rukmini Arundale, the heights scaled by the wizard of the Mridangam Shri Palghat Mani Iyer and the doyens of Carnatic Music, the late Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar and the current Bishma Pitamaha Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, the streams of Bhakthi flowing from the gifted throats of Bhimsen Joshi and Anup Jalota — to mention only a very few — has been the heritage bequeathed by Shanmukhananda to India and the world. The very same grand Hall of Fame has been the venue of the glittering ceremony of the presentation of India's Oscar Award. Even India's acknowledged Queen of Melody will agree that in her ascent to world recognition India's Shanmukhananda Hall was as important and responsible as London's Albert Hall.

But Shanmukhananda has not rested content by providing an outlet for the cultural needs of its members and the general public. It realises its social responsibility of providing health care to its members and the general public and learning in music to the seeker and the student. It has, therefore, established a Medical Centre where over fifty of the best medical practitioners give their time and talent to provide health care purely in an honorary capacity to the needy, many of whom belong to the weakest sections of society. In the same spirit it runs a Sangeetha Vidyalaya where over 500 students and seekers learn Vocal and Instrumental Carnatic and Hindustani music. The Vidyalaya has established a reputation for turning out products who in course of time will be con-

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sidered maestros in their art. The Medical Centre will shortly blossom into a full fledged hospital with clinical, surgical and pathological facilities, in association with another sister Institution, the Bharati Medical Research Foundation.

The immediate task on hand is the rebuilding and the reconstruction of the mighty edifice. This is indeed a stupendous effort which will tax the ingenuity, the spirit of innovation, the resourcefulness and the technical capacity and acumen of several engineering, structural, acoustic, aircondition and related infrastructure specialists. Getting hold of this combination of effort and expertise and co-ordinating the entire programme of reconstruction and finishing it within a reasonable time frame will test the will and the skills of the management of the Sabha considerably. The Management is very acutely aware of this tremendous responsibility and has been attending to this task on a war footing. The awareness and knowledge that thousands and thousands of well-wishers and connoisseurs not only in this country but also all over the globe will cooperate and help in every way in its accomplishment is an inspiration and a spur to all of us, who otherwise may have been daunted and nervous.

Above, all the reconstruction programme will involve a colossal amount of expenditure, particularly because we would like to take the opportunity of availing the latest technology and the

most up-to-date innovations in every aspect of this mighty endeavour. On a modest estimate the cost involved is expected to be in the region of Rupees three crores.

We have appealed for generous contributions to the Reconstruction Fund from our members, patrons, performing artistes, business, charitable and philanthropic individuals and institutions, Public Sector bodies, State and Union Governments. We have every hope that the response to our appeal will not only be positive, but also ample, particularly as the cause is noble and dear to the hearts of all our well-wishers, and because of the realisation that this great cultural landmark has to be reestablished.

The past has been a period of great glory, the present one of agony and grinding sorrow. But ecstasy is the name of the future. Out of the baptism of fire, as if from the ashes, Phoenix-like will emerge a new giant, a newer monument in dedication and achievement and a shining beacon of national and international amity, understanding and culture.

*Uttishta Jaagrata Praapya Varaan
Nibodhata*

Awake, Arise and rest not till the goal is reached.

(Kathopanishad II-14)

Dr. V. Subramanian
(President)

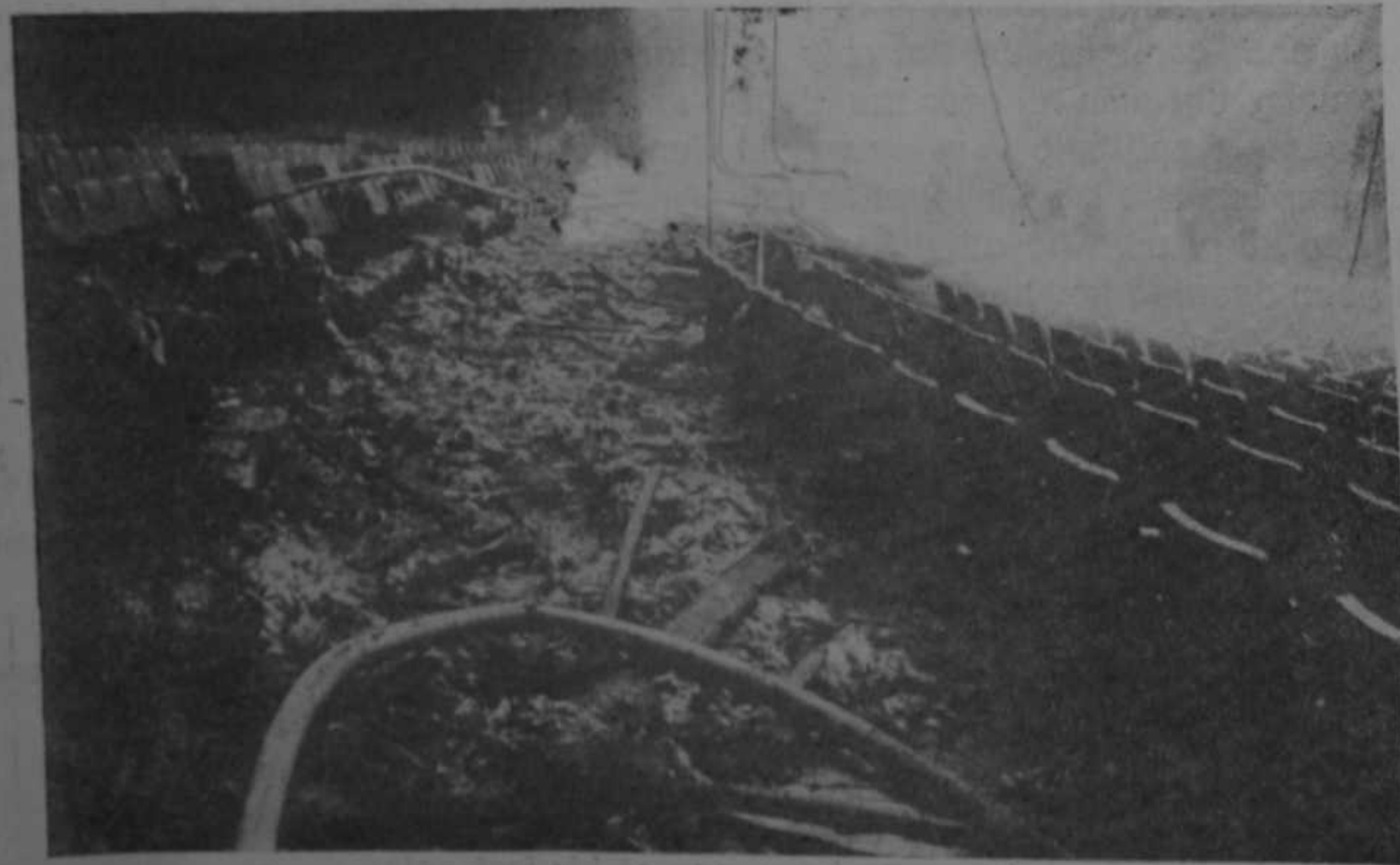
As we go to the press we learn with profound grief the untimely demise of Veena maestro S. Balachander. The sorrow is all the more deeper to Shanmukhananda since only recently he had sent his mite for rebuilding the auditorium. Perhaps, one of his last acts.

— Ed.

THE TRAGEDY



The Hall Before



The Aftermath . . .

IN PICTURES



Governor C. Subramaniam . . . "how will it look when rebuilt?" . . .

(Pic. : Bharat Dangiya)



Maharashtra CM Sharad Pawar inspecting . . . a source of strength to the Sabha

Messages of Sympathy.....

A large number of messages have been received. For want of space we publish excerpts from a few)

"Disastrous though the fire was, may it be turned into a blessing by rebuilding a modern upto-date auditorium of our ancient cultural traditions".

— President R. Venkataraman

"There is great deal of public sympathy for this 'best auditorium in Asia'. Providence creates something good out of every calamity."

— Governor C. Subramanian

"The auditorium to be built may have better facilities and equipped with the latest state-of-the-art technology".

— Maharashtra C.M. Sharad Pawar

I do not think there are many institutions in our country or elsewhere whose damage or loss will be sensed as a personal loss to lacs of people. Shanmukhananda Hall has this rare distinction — because of the unique role it has played in the life of people in India, more particularly Bombay.

If in such a devastating fire which left only the shell of the auditorium behind there was not one solitary case of injury or worse, this, too must be credited to what the institution is. I really have no words to express my sorrow at the unfortunate happening.

Murli S. Deora, M.P.
(President of Bombay Regional
Congress Committee)

"Shocked to learn of the devastating fire in a Hall which played an important role in public life of Bombay."

— J. J. Bhabha Trustee in-charge
NCPA

"Distressed beyond words. I do hope it would rise up afresh as expeditiously as possible with all modern facilities and again become the proud Temple of Music of Asia".

— S. Ramakrishnan,
Executive Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

"Almighty has shown mercy and so no loss of life has occurred. Soon Sabha will be brought to original position and programmes will be held with vigour and lustre."

— H. H. Sri Jeer of Ahobila Mutt

.....We Value.....

.....Words of Cheer.....

"Deeply shocked to learn of the tragic fire".

— D. K. Pattammal & Shri Iswaran

"The tragic fire accident could be due to 'கண் திருஷ்டி'.

At this critical movement I extend my support

— Lalgudi G. Jayaraman

"One of the most excellent theatres in Asia. What a thing to happen to the Sabha! My services as, an artiste are at your disposal."

— Hema Malini

"We were really shocked to hear ... the loss sustained by the recent fire accident in the Sabha We pray to Lord Shanmukha to see that again the Sabha's mammoth premises put to the original shape as early as possible."

**Dr. M. L. Vasanthakumari &
Shri R. K. Moorthee**

"நம் சபைக்கு இப்படி ஒரு விபத்து நடக்கும் என கனவில்கூட எண்ண வில்லை. ... என் ஒத்துழைப்பைத் தர கடமையுடன் காத்துக்கொண்டிருக்கிறேன்.

— ஏ. கே. வி. நடராஜன்

"Offering my musical mite for the colossal task ahead."

— Mani Krishnaswamy



State Home Minister Arun Mehta with the Sabha President

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An Appeal

RECREATING THE TEMPLE OF MUSIC

The Shanmukhananda family is now in deep distress having suffered a grievous calamity in the form of a devastating fire which occurred on the 28th February, 1990. The auditorium was totally gutted and the Seating, Acoustics and Air-conditioning infrastructure sustained substantial damage. There was also some structural damage.

In an immortal phrase, Revered Rajaji once described the Shanmukhananda Hall as a "Temple of Music by Music and for Music". A cruel fate has dealt with a mortal blow to this temple and one of the greatest monuments of National Integration and Cultural Synthesis which was the pride of this country has been very seriously impaired. The Cultural and Social milieu of the cosmopolitan metropolis of Bombay and indeed of the whole country has suffered a rude jolt. It will be an extremely difficult task and also take a considerable time to fill the void.

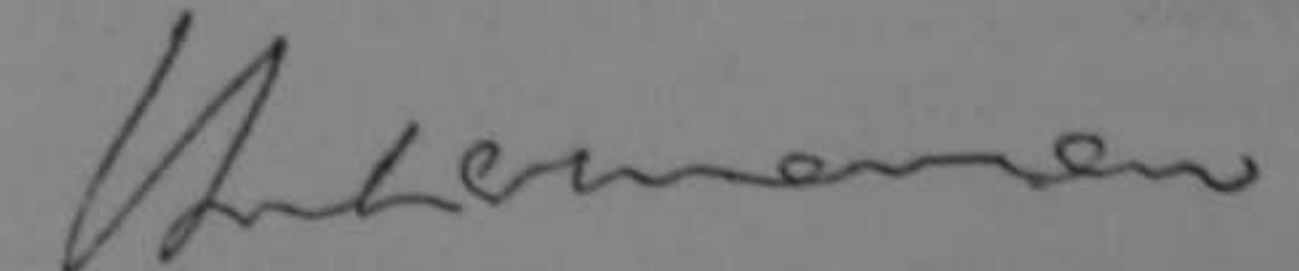
But this calamity is also a great challenge your Management has dared to accept only because of the tremendous support, goodwill and affection which the Sabha enjoys universally among knowledgeable people and connoisseurs of the Fine Arts not only in this country but also from all over the globe.

The rebuilding of this wonderful edifice is a stupendous task requiring effort, ingenuity and innovativeness of a very high order and the best as well as most upto-date technical expertise in various fields. It will also mean a colossal amount of expenditure. On a modest estimate the cost of reconstruction will be in the region of Rs. 3 crores.

We have appealed to our members, artistes, organisers of programmes, charitable and business bodies, Union and State Governments, Public Sector Organisations etc., for generous contributions in cash or kind. Such contributions will enjoy tax exemption under Section 80(g) of the Income-tax Act.

I would personally like to appeal most humbly and devoutly to all our readers not only to personally contribute whatever they can and be a partner in this great and grand endeavour to build a better and brighter Shanmukhananda, but also to persuade, influence and inspire their friends and all well-wishers of the Sabha to do likewise.

yours sincerely,



(Dr. V. Subramanian)

FATHER OF TAMIL MUSIC RENAISSANCE-I*

By
N. RAJAGOPALAN, IAS (Retd.)

The Oil and Natural Gas Commission claims :

"All the eight wells are oil-bearing; the oil is of good quality and Narimanam field is extending and is likely to extend further."

The Commission is clearly not aware that Narimanam started 'extending' as far back as 1811 when it gave birth to the immortal Father of Tamil Music Renaissance and Modern Tamil Opera, Gopala Krishna Bharati (1811-1881) and that only the quality of its oil is good but that the compositions of its son are *par excellence*.

ONE-UP

Prahlada Bakti Vijayam and *Nauka Charitram* of Tyagaraja in Telugu, *Krishna Lila Tarangini* in Sanskrit of Swami Narayana Tirtha and *Rama Natakam* of Arunachala Kavirayar in Tamil have certainly enriched Karnatak music and literature. Gopala Krishna Bharati's Tamil Opera *Nandanar Charitram* is just not another in that tradition. It broke new ground. It is unique in its exalted concept, subtlety in presentation and projections, incisiveness in its penetration and the revolutionary impact of its social and spiritual message.

Barring a laconic account in *Periapuranam* on Nandanar, there was no story, drama or legend earlier. It was the genius of Bharati that brought forth the magnificent opera, reflecting his deep study of the rural socio-economic scenery and its deep malaise, blended with spiritual fragrance, his enormous creative talents and musical acumen. As S. V. Parthasarathi says :

"Nandanar Charitram has an abiding place in the hearts of music-loving public and which alone, in its lofty reaches of devotion and directness of appeal, in its purity and originality of the kirtan pattern, would have gained its author his immortality."

TOTALITY OF SURRENDER

Nandanar is a harijan farm-servant in the employ of a brahmin landlord. He has an insatiable desire to have a darshan of Lord Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer of Chidambaram. His caste, vocation, planting season for paddy and other factors militate against the fulfilment of his ardent desire. The purity of his devotion is unequalled and the intensity of his longing to see the Lord unmatched and profound.

* Excerpt from the book *A Garland or A Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers & Musicians* by the author, available with "Carnatic Classics", 3, 24th Cross St., Indira Nagar, Madras-600 020.

The Lord comes to his rescue and ensures that His humble and innocent devotee from Meladanur is allowed to go to Chidambaram and received there with all honours and paraphernalia by none else than the priests and temple authorities. That is the glory of Saint Nandanar. Devotion is shown to transcend caste barriers, social inhibitions and religious deterrents. The true devotee reaches the Almighty notwithstanding all odds, restraints and constraints. The needed qualification is not education, nor status nor occupation but the purity of devotion and the totality of surrender to Him.

"A BLITZ"

And it was given to Bharati to portray the life of this devotee in the Tamil opera bringing out the ingredients of true spiritualism, the poignancy of the story he had himself woven, the enthralling pleas of Nandanar, the subtle techniques resorted to by the landlord and the maladies of rural unorganised labour. The enormous thrust of the social and spiritual message the opera carried in far-flung, slumbering villages one hundred and twenty-eight years back and the tumultuous, magnificent reception it had may well be imagined and appreciated. Bharati chose the fictitious landlord in a Brahmin to highlight the effects of his opera. Its natural style, rich imagery, profound insight and popular acclamation have made it the noblest Tamil work of modern times. The theme was profoundly sensitive, the characterisation fresh and attractive. Bharati wrote it 'like a giant and finished it like a jeweller'.

The entire plot and its characters except Nandanar are figments of Bharati's fertile imagination but were not concei-

ved in joy or luxury. Poor Bharati took up his frugal residence at Anandathandavapuram near Meladanur, the birth place of Nandanar and drew inspiration. Narimanam, Mudicondan and Anandathandavapuram with their resplendent virgin rural settings, the vast expanses of smiling paddy fields, the lazy, little and large serpentine channels, the rustling early morn feast of birds' chirpings and vedic chants, the late evening social and spiritual exercise to the rhythm of chiming of the temple bells and the midnight creaks of passing carts as if applauding the divine melody of the rustic songs in upper octaves of unlettered cartmen and all these amidst discordant social and religious barriers left their indelible impressions in the receptive mind of Bharati, the poor orphan with nothing to boast of save his 'Glorious Search for Truth and Excellence'. He had drunk deep the charm and fragrance, the glory and inequity, the beauty and ugliness of rural life, then in their virgin state sans the modern transport, ONGC drillings and the strife. He wore his grinding poverty and physical distortions as lightly as he wore his cheap loin cloth.

A TRAIL-BLAZER

His opera was an instant success. It was a blitz. The book, strangely printed by a Frenchman, went into its reprint the next year itself. Dramas and musical discourses were seen everywhere. His songs were the delight of the young and old, the connoisseur and the lay, the theist and the atheist. It sowed the seeds of an unprecedented social revolution and in this Gopala Krishna Bharati is a trail-blazer to Mahatma Gandhi and Subramania Bharati. He democratised the opera even as the other Bharati did a century later. He

carried the message of Untouchability, even as the Mahatma did a century later, to the nook and corners of the silent, innocent rural areas. 'Nandanar' became a household word overnight.

'MESSAGE' OF BHARATI

A word about the character 'Landlord'. The farm-servant very persuasively represents that he had grown-up with the kind favours of the master and prays to be sent to Chidambaram with his blessings. (He would not sneak out). Finding his importunity too difficult to ignore, the landlord invokes his right to get his land planted and tells him to complete the planting of his two hundred and seventy acres of lands and go.

The tender heart of the devout melts in anguish. Had not Subramania Bharati later said :

"Un Kannil neer Vazhindal en nenjil Udhiram Kottudadi".

That reaction is not in the landlord but is in the Lord Himself. His heart bleeds in sympathy with the lot of his devotee. The next morn the entire farm smiles with the richest crop which any Green Revolution would envy at. The landlord surrenders — not with his permission or blessings. He begs :

"Not realising your eminence as a true devotee of Siva, I had said several things. Kindly forget my sins".

Does he stop? No, Bharati does not allow him to. The scriptures say that surrender to be effective should be complete and total. The landlord is aware of it. So he says :

"Please take me as a disciple and initiate me so that I could realise Celestial Bliss."

That was the message which bade 'adieu' to the social cancer of untouchability. The message of Bharati spread to every village and family like fire and the opera entered on its penumbra only because the message has realised fulfilment. The present day elite and lay may fail to recapitulate the immensity of its popularity during 1861-1951.

HISTORY'S INJUSTICE

History with its ample pages has not chosen to give Gopala Krishna Bharati even A PASSING NOD OF APPRECIATION. It is Bharati who set in motion the process of modernisation and socialisation of musical content and wove into the laconic account in *Periapuranam* with the finesse of Dacca Muslim weaver a beautiful story, fiction and drama and impregnated it with apt lyrical and musical phrases and passages stirring up the dormant feelings and emotions of every section of the community. The story carried the audience to such dizzy heights that it became the *tour de force* of every dramatist and musical discourse (Harikatha Kalakshepam) artiste. Nay, there have been two good feature films too with stalwarts like Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer and M. M. Dandapani Desikar taking the leading roles. The opera has inbuilt versatility, vitality and vibrancy to cater to any audience, place or occasion. Bharati was born poor but 'was a great and abundantly enriched man — enriched by nature, learning, living and thinking — all taken in his stride'.

Has not the genius of Kambar introduced refinements in the delineation of

the chief characters of Ramayana? And remember Bharati, as had Kambar, has drunk the honeyed waters of the same river Kaveri, which Tyagaraja extols in his *Sari Vedalina* (Asaveri) and *Muripemu galige gada* (Mukhari). Then how can he refrain from giving expressions to the noble, vibrant urges of his impressionable heart? Bharati feels that the venerable Sekkizhar, author of *Periyapuranam*, had failed to do full justice to the spiritual glory, divine purity and poignant pathos inherent in the life of Nandanar and proceeds to make 'ample amends'. If absolute surrender and purity of devotion to the Lord qualify *ipso facto* for the merger of the Jeevathma (Soul) with the Paramathma (Ultimate), if Rama could find no imperfection in the quality or the intensity of the devotion of Sabhari, Bharati rebels against Sekkizhar's version of Nandanar entering Fire to divest himself of possible impurity.

Bharati is conscious that the Lord of Fire 'Agni' had once been scorched when Sita entered fire for the ostensible purpose of demonstrating her purity before the world. He is also conscious that 'Agni Theertham', the seawaters at Rameswaram, would not allow 'Agni' to enter it a second time since its cooling powers had all been consumed when 'Agni' entered in earlier! So, at one stroke, he saves Nandanar of the indignity of subjecting him to tests for establishing his credentials to enter the Sanctum of the Lord and saves 'Agni' too of being punished a second time. If chastity is hotter than fire, absolute devotion to God should be hotter still, since the former is but a personal virtue while the latter is a positive, practical attainment!

The eminence of Bharati lies in elevating noble Nandanar nobler. The Tamil adage runs 'who can make beauty more beautiful?' Even so, the revolutionary in Bharati cries, 'Who can purify purity itself?' That is the poetic justice brought in by the intellectual idealist of Narimanam.

POETIC JUSTICE

Surely, during his stay at Anandathan-davapuram, he should have communed with Nandanar intensely. "Tirunalai Povar" is the name adopted by Sekkizhar for Nandanar and Apostle Sundarar says, "Servitor am I to the perfect Tirunalai Povar." This name arose out of a cruel joke current in the village. Nandanar's heart was set on the Lord but bonds of realities made him postpone his visit to Chidambaram and say daily, 'I would go tomorrow'. The derisive nickname "Tirunalai Povar" (he who would go tomorrow) came to be coined by the mocking folks of the slum. Should such sarcasm and derisive nickname be perpetuated and gazetted in *Periapuranam* by Sekkizhar and later by Sundarar? Could they not have recalled his true name and given a burial to the annoying and irritating jest? Bharati cries in silence, 'Et tu Brute?'.

Here again, he scores over the others. The poetic genius of Bharati identified itself with the melancholy, suffering and ordeals of the hero before it revels in the glory of Nandanar which the Lord of Chidambaram took special initiative Himself to publicise. He arranged to Nandanar a royal reception, a triumphal entry which few else had enjoyed. The sense of poetic justice in Bharati permits no *faux pas*.

(To be concluded)



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SRI NARAYANA TIRTHA YATI

By
VATSALA BHASKARAN

Bhakthi and Bhajanas are common to all four directions of India. Bhagavathas all over the country have been instrumental in creating an awareness of the Bhakthi cult amongst their respective people; but only Karnatak music has the unique credit of imbibing Bhajana Sampradaya compositions into concerts, thereby fusing Bhakthi with entertainment. Our saints said, *Sangitha gnanamu bhakthi vina Sanmargamu Galadhe* and *Thala melagaliddu Prema villada gana Kelanu Hari Thalanu*.

Our auditoria become the temple where the musician, the devotee, worships not only the "Adhi Devatha" of the Keertana, but also the Raga devata and takes his audience along with him on this devotional trip. This worship through music started as Bhajana Sampradaya and seeped into Kutcheri Sampradaya. One never feels fulfilled, unless the pathetic entreaties of Syama Sastri to Goddess Kamakshi, the friendly nuzzlings and questionings of Tyagaraja to Rama or the highly beautiful descriptions, designs of Dikshitar in his humble hauteur to any given deity of that particular composition or any other great composer who has emotionally given vent to his inner struggles and devotion, are depicted with the same emotional fervour as the composer, in a concert.

FROM BHAJANA TO CONCERT

Great saint-composers such as Annamacharya and Purandara Dasa have

paved the way for this divinity in music, but Tirtha Narayana Yathi went once step ahead and created his magnum opus *Krishna Leela Tarangini* — Bhakthi and entertainment in fusion. It is a musical play in the Bhajana Sampradaya, no doubt; but some of the compositions are worth the main place in a concert. Probably this combination helped propagate his work so much, that some of his original Varnamettus are still available, unlike in the case of Purandara Dasa or Annamacharya.

Biographical details are repetitive and boring but they do establish the time, place and circumstances in which an individual lived and worked.

Narayana Tirtha, like Sadhasiva Brahmam, Saint Tyagaraja, was also of Telugu origin. He was born in a place called Khaza near Mangalgiri of Andhra Pradesh, migrated down South to Tanjore in Tamil Nadu. There are different versions regarding his gradual shifting of scene from Andhra Pradesh to Tamil Nadu. But there is no dispute about the few basic details that have been given here. His time was between 1650-1750 A.D. Though the exact year of his birth is not known, abundant proofs are available about the approximate time span, right from his own works to that of Varagur Narayana Kavi (1868 — 1935) later and down to researchers of great calibre like Dr. V. Raghavan and Prof. Sambamoorthy of yester years. The story of the divine boar which led

him to Varagur where he finally settled down and established Bhajana Paddathi and Bhagavatha Sampradaya in the traditions of Kuchipudi and Bhagavatha Mela of Merattur is very well known.

He also celebrated Sri Krishna Jayanthi and conducted Sikyothsava (known as "Uriyadi" in Tamil) which has been going on even now. (*Sikyothsava Prahanda*.)

Varagur, or Bhoopathy Rajapuram as it was known before the incident of the "Varaha", was a seat of music and dance during the time of the Nayak Kings (17th century). Kshetrappa, the famous composer of Dance Padas, also visited Varagur and made a note of that event. Narayana Tirtha attained Samadhi in Thirupointurutti.

Tirtha Narayana Yathi is said to belong to the guru parampara of Sri Tyagaraja. Sonti Venkata Ramaiya, the Guru of Tyagaraja was the son and disciple of Sonti Venkata Subbiah, from the shishya parampara of Narayana Tirtha. In fact Tyagaraja himself is supposed to have taken inspiration from Narayana Tirtha's *Krishna Leela Tarangini* and composed his two musical plays *Pralada Charithram* and *Nauka Charithram*.

BHAGAVATHA REFINED

Though Narayana Tirtha is hailed as the incarnation of Jayadeva from whom he has drawn inspiration, he seems to have taken Vyasa's Bhagavatha as the base of his work *Krishna Leela Tarangini*, ofcourse, with his own Kalpana adding lustre (like Radha who is not mentioned in *Bhagavatha*).

A COMPOSER FIRST

Krishna Leela Tarangini contains Twelve cantos as does Jayadeva's

Gita Govinda. It consists of 145 songs, 267 verses and numerous other passages. It is a musical dance drama, where chaste Sanskrit has been used. It is worth studying as a work of Sanskrit literature itself. It is the story of Lord Krishna from the time of his birth to his marriage with Rukmini. It is full of literary adornments like Sleshma, Upama etc; has Gadhyas and Padhyas interwoven into it. Narayana Tirtha has not taken any liberty with language but has presented it in its purest form; but unlike Sadhasiva Brahman, Narayana Tirtha is more celebrated as a composer of music in the history of Karnatak music than as a "litterateur".

COMPREHENSIVE TREATISE

The big gap in the tradition of composers from Purandara Dasa to Tyagaraja is filled some what by Narayana Tirtha. *Krishna Leela Tarangini* is an authoritative Lakshya treatise of Ragas and Rasa; it contains Slokas, Dharus, Dvipadas, Chathush Padas, Choornikas along with musical passages, which are interspersed with Keertanas in appropriate ragas. These Keertanas which normally have Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam, are sometimes preceded by a virutham or fitted with Jathis in places where Jathis are apt; e.g., the long Keertana of Yajna Patnis in the third Taranga, which has different Jathis for different Charanas, and the Rasakrida in the Seventh Taranga in Raga Nattai, Dhruva Tala.

The musical status of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* has been attained by *Krishna Leela Tarangini*. No less than 40 Ragas which are in vogue in present times are found; some of them rare and some of Hindusthani origin i.e., Dvija-

wanti, Gauri. He has made mention of quite of few Ragas in his 9th Taranga : Bhoopalam, Desakshi, Devagandhari, Malahari, Vasantha etc., and the Talas mentioned are Dhruva, Ata etc., and the Gathis of Laghu, Alaghu, Dhuritha, Maddhyama, Mandhara, and the Mudras of Padakam, Thripadakam, Sikaram, Kadaka Silimukam etc., are also mentioned. There is a piece in "Sooladhi" also.

The compositions are in the following Ragas :

Natai, Malavi, Nada Namakriya, Saurashtram, Ahiri, Dhanyasi, Kambodi, Todi, Suruthi, Neelambari, Saranga, Kalyani, Dvijayanthi, Varali, Mohanam, Bilahari, Sree, Punnagaravali, Husaini, Kurinji, Malahari, Hindolam, Sankarabharanam, Bhairavi, Bhoopalam, Gauri, Ananda Bhairavi, Kedara Gaula, Yadukula Kamboji, Mukari, Saveri, Kapi and Arabhi — 33 in all and in Talas : Ata, Jampa, Thripata, Adi, Roopaka, Chapu, Dhruva, Matya etc.

Some of the Keertanas have gained prominence at the concert : *Jaya Jaya Gokula Bala*, which was originally in Kurinji, was converted to a Ragamalika by Thiruvottiyur Thyagayya and became a stable item in almost all Dramas three decades ago; *Pooraya Mama Kamam* in Bilahari, in all its original splendour; *Govinda Ghataya* in Bhairavi, *Madhava Mamava* in Nilambari, which is not only a concert piece, but also prominent in South Indian marriage pandals; *Viksheham Katha* in Ahiri, *Aloka-ye* in Kambodhi; *Kshemam Kuru* in Saveri, (which is sung now in Mohanam also); *Kataya Kataya* in Kalyani, *Charanam Bhava Karuna Mayi* in Arabhi, to quote a few. The beginning song in Harikathas *Himagiri Thanaya Padhyam* is also from the opening Taranga of *Krishna Leela Tarangini*.

His Angitham was synonymous of the word Narayana Tirtha i.e., Yathi Narayana Tirtha, Vana Narayana Tirtha etc. He has subscribed himself as "Siva Narayana Tirtha" and "Siva Ramananda Tirtha Padambujha Brahmana" also in some of his Keerthanas, in humble homage to his Guru Siva Ramananda Tirtha.

INSPIRATION TO TYAGARAJA

Veteran historians have done some very interesting studies about the way Sadguru Tyagaraja has not only derived inspiration but also borrowed ideas from *Krishna Leela Tarangini*. A lot of similarities are found in ideas and concepts. To quote few examples : the Mangala slokam on Ganesha of *Krishna Leela Tarangini* and *Giri Raja Suta Thanaya* of Tyagabrahman. In the first Taranga we find attributes to "yaga-yoga-raga-bhogathyaga" which is reflected in *Ragasudha rasa* in Andolika, Tyagaraja's *Nikila loka-nidana* also is traced to a piece in Ananda Bhairavi in 11th Taranga. *Vinata Sutha Vahana* of Tyagaraja is said to be an echo of *Vinata suta ghana vahana* in Saurashtram; *Bhaktha chandana* in Kambodhi, *Kanakambara dhara* in Kedara Gaula and *Meru Samana* in Bilahari are all quoted to be the sources of some of Sri Tyagaraja's other compositions.

Tirtha Narayana Yathi has also authored some more literary works and one or two other musical plays which are found to be incomplete. *Subhodini*, *Vivarana Dheepika*, *Parijatha haranam* (in-complete), *Haribhakthi Sudharnavam*. *Krishna Leela Tarangini* is the only complete musical dance drama. The credit of keeping this epic drama alive should fully be given to Bhagavatha melas, from whose Bhaja-

na's the concert stage has picked up quite a few popular Keerthanas. But most of the notation is found missing. If all that can be unearthed and propagated it will be of monumental benefit to the world of Karnatak music and a great service to our posterity. The Aradhana festival of Sri Narayana Tirtha Yathi is celebrated by a committee at Thirupointurutti where great efforts are taken to popularise this great saint composer's songs. In Tanjore some

150 students are taught the Tarangam every year with the aid or a grant from the Sangeet Natak Akademy.

The great old man of Karnatak music, Sri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer wrote in the Deepawali issue of *Anandavikatan* (1938), that repeating any Keertana on any concert should be banned for at least 5 years to bring out all the treasures that have not been brought to light. Which says all.

FORM IV

(See Rule 8 of Press & Registration of Books Act)

1. Place of Publication : 292, Jayshankar Yagnik Marg, Bombay-400 022.
2. Periodicity of Publication : Quarterly
3. Printer's Name & Address : Sevak Press,
G-4 & 5, Shalimar Industrial Estate,
Matunga Labour Camp,
Bombay-400 019.
4. Publisher's Name : Shri S. Seshadri
Nationality : Indian
Address : Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts &
Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.), Bombay-400 022.
5. Editor's Name : Dr. (Smt.) Sulochana Rajendran
Nationality : Indian
Address : Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts &
Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.), Bombay-400 022.
6. Name and address of individuals who own the Newspaper and Partners or Shareholders holding more than one percent of the capital. : Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts &
Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.),
Plot No. 292, Jayshankar Yagnik Marg,
Bombay-400 022.

I, S. Seshadri, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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PANCHARATNA KEERTHANAS OF TYAGARAJA

By

Sangeetha Bhooshanam T. S. KRISHNASWAMI

To study the life of the Saint-Composer Sadguru Tyagaraja and understand the spiritual, philosophical and musical content of his keerthanas is a rich and rewarding experience. Among his immortal compositions, his Pancharatna Keerthanas stand out prominently.

FIVE SETS OF PANCHARATNA KEERTHANAS

There are five known sets of Tyagaraja's Pancharatna keerthanas namely his Ghana Raga Pancharatnas in Naata, Gowla, Arabhi, Varali and Sri Ragas known as Ghanaraga Panchakam and sung by musicians and devotees at the saint's annual Aradhana festival at Thiruvaiyaru and all other places where his Aradhana is celebrated, his Kovoov Pancharatna Keerthanas, Sriranga Pancharatna Keerthanas, Tiruvotriyur Pancharatna Keerthanas and Lalgudi Pancharatna Keerthanas. All of them are gems of Bhakti, art and poetry.

PILGRIMAGE

In the course of his pilgrimage to holy shrines, Tyagaraja went to Tirupati and had darshan of Lord Venkateswara. On his return journey, he visited Kovoov at the request of Sundaresa Mudaliar, a bhakta and patron of Art. He had darshan of Lord Sundareswara at the local shrine and sang His praise in five Keerthanas known as Kovoov Pancharatnam. They are *Shambho Mahadeva* (Kamavardhani-Roopakam), *Nammi Vachina nannu* (Kalyani-Roopakam),

Kori Sevimpa Raare (Kharaharapriya-Adi), *Eevasudha neevanti daivamu* (Sahana-Adhi) and *Sundareswaruni* (Sankarabharanam-Adi).

Srirangam, described by devotees as Bhooloka Vaikuntam, was one of the shrines visited by Tyagaraja. There he sang again five keerthanas, *Joothamurraare* (Arabhi-Roopakam), *O Ranga saayi* (Kambhoji-Adi), *Karunajoodavaiya* (Saaranga-Adi), *Raajuvedale* (Desika Thodi-Roopakam) and *Vinaraada* (Devagaandhaari-Adi), collectively known as Sriranga Pancharatnam.

At the request of his illustrious disciple Veena Kuppaiyar, again, Tyagaraja visited Thiruvotriyur, a place near Madras, had darshan of Tripurasundari at the temple and sang five keerthanas known as Thiruvotriyur Pancharatnam. They are *Kannatalli neevu* (Saveri-Adi), *Sundari ninnu* (Arabhi-Misrachapu), *Sundari nannindarilo* (Begada-Roopakam), *Sundari nee divya roopamunu* (Kalyani-Adi) and *Daarini Delusukonti* (Suddha Saveri-Adi).

Lalgudi Ramaiyar was a prominent disciple of Tyagaraja and at his request, the Saint went to Lalgudi, had darshan of God Saptarishiswarar and Goddess Pravruddha Srimathi. In praise of the Lord he sang two keerthanas, *Eesapaa-himaam* (Kalyani-Roopakam) and *Devasri Tapas Theertha Pura Nivasa* (Madhyamaavati-Tripura), and three in praise of His consort, *Lalite Sri Pravruddha Srimathi* (Bhairavi-Adi), *Mahita Pravruddha*

Srimathi (Kambhoji-Chapu) and *Gati Neevani Ne Kori Vachiti* (Thodi-Adi). All the five keerthanas are known as Lal-gudi Pancharatna Keerthanas. As all these Pancharatnas are a lyrical beauty, poetical wealth and artistic treasure, they are rightly called Pancharatna Keerthanas.

A study of these Pancharatnas would reveal that the Ghana Raga Panchakam are a class by themselves. They not only have a magnificent musical architecture, and structural uniformity, but also reveal the Saint's genius in the science and art of music. They are the peak where the art and science finely blended to form a musical magnanimity.

The other Pancharatnas are Sthalakeertanas, each 'bunch' composed at one stretch during his visit to the place. One may find an apparent difference in them. While Kovoov and Sriranga Pancharatnas are dedicated to the Lord alone, that of Tiruvotriyur is on the Devi and at Lalgudi the saint sang on both the Lord and His consort. However, these differences are only apparent and

in essence they show the ultimate unity or oneness.

For Tyagaraja there was no 'Deiva bheda'. He (the Lord) is *bheda Vaada Rahita*, he described in *Nammi Vachchina* (Kalyani). To him his Ishta devata, Lord Rama, was the embodiment of all Gods and Goddesses. He addressed Dharmasamvardhani, the consort of Panchanadeewara as being Herself Siva and Rama in *Karunajudavamma* (Todi).

The Trinity — Brahma, Vishnu and Siva — themselves he called Rama's 'Leela' in *Nijamarmulanu* (Umabharanam) in the stance, *Adi Deiva bheda mulanu leela kalga jesina*, and their respective roles of *Srishti* (creation), *pushti* (preservation) and *nashti* (destruction) were assigned by Rama Himself who was all supreme (*Manasa Sri Ramachandrani* : Isamanohari). Rama's supremacy is again reiterated in *Leela Srushti Jagathrayamane* in *Ramabhakti Samrajyam* (Suddha Bangala). That He abides in everybeing, from ant to Trimurti was finely couched in *Rama nannu brovara* (Harikambhoji).

PORTRAIT GALLERY

A CHERISHABLE 'NIDHI'

The latest to join the galaxy of luminaries in the portrait gallery of Shanmukhananda Sabha was Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. S. Ramanathan.

It needs no mention that the late Sangita Kalanidhi was really a 'nidhi', a walking encyclopaedia in music, besides being an ace performer. That he enriched many a conference, seminar, music festivals with his erudite scholarship and excellent performances goes without saying.

What was significant on the occasion of the unveiling of portrait (Jan. 27) donated by an ardent student of his, Smt. Seetha Narayanan, was that it was done by another Sangeeta Yogi hailing from the same 'sylvan clime' of the Annamalai University, Sangeeta Bhushanam T. S. Krishna-swami. A violin maestro, TSK is an epitome of a Guru, now adorning the Shanmukhananda Sangeeta Vidyalaya.

The Sabha also felicitated the Octogenarian maestro TSK on his Satabhishekam.

SANGEET SAMRAT TANSEN

He was "the greatest singer to be born in the last thousand years", acclaimed Abul Fazl, the renowned historian in his *Aine Akbari*, about Sangeet Samrat Tansen. The 'Samrat' passed away four centuries ago, yet he lives through his immortal compositions.

In the field of Indian music two names shine prominently like resplendent stars — those of Tansen and Tyagaraja. Tansen, who was a fine singer in *dhrupad* style, worked wonders with the ragas which became live thing in his hands. He introduced into Hindustani music a breeze of freshness, simplicity, without impairing its native dignity and force.

He succeeded in heralding a new musical era and became the harbinger of a fresh generation of poets. In his revolutionary change of style of ragas and raginis he achieved immortal fame. Yet he did not wish to snap the ties with the past and to the end remained a true and faithful supporter of the old school. This is evident from the fact that he always gave the utmost reverence to his guru, Swami Haridas, in his *Mangalacharan* before singing.

Though no sure data on the point are available, it is believed according to references in *Aine Akbari* that this great musician was born in Behat, now a desolate village near Gwalior. The attachment Tansen had for Gwalior, where he was buried in accordance with his wishes, though he breathed his last in Delhi, only reinforces the belief.

Born in 1506 as the son of Makaranda Pande, Ramatanu Pande (the name

"Tansen" was a title conferred on him by the Emperor Akbar, when he was serving at the Moghul court) was 'discovered' by Swami Haridas. Tansen was guarding a garden which had been repeatedly ravaged by pilferers. When all attempts to stall them proved futile, Tansen had recourse to ventriloquism and gave out growls in imitation of prowling tiger. This had a terrific effect on the intruders who immediately took to their heels.

MUSICAL PRODIGY

Swami Haridas of Brindaban, with his disciples, was passing that way one day when he heard Tansen's tiger growl. He stopped for a moment, then entered the garden only to find the young boy in whose voice he often discerned great musical potentialities. With his father's permission Tansen was taken to Brindaban and was given training. He returned to Behat after some time as a full-fledged musician and practised the various intricacies of the ragas at the local Shiva temple. His whole time was spent in singing, praying, composing and teaching music.

The villagers of Behat even today speak with admiration of this great musical prodigy and the elders among them point with pride of the temple the walls of which swayed to the sweet music of Tansen, as he practised day and night. Most of his songs were in praise of Gods such as Rama and Krishna.

It is said that Tansen was born to Makaranda Pande through the blessings of the great fakir of Gwalior, Mohamad Ghaus. For this fakir the Pande family had the highest respect and

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when Tansen's father passed away he told the boy to respect Mohammad Ghaus, obey and seek his advice whenever he was in difficulties. Within a short period Tansen's mother also passed away and the boy left for Gwalior to stay with Mohammad Ghaus.

During this period he married one Hussaini, of brahmim ancestry, and embraced Islam. This marriage was arranged by Mohammad Ghaus and by it Tansen had four sons, Surat Sen, Sarat Sen, Taranga Sen and Bilas Khan and a daughter, by name Saraswati. Each was perfect in the art of music. Saraswati was married to the renowned Chief of Singhalgarh Misra Singh, the renowned vina player of his time. Some of the descendants of Tansen's family are still with us.

Tansen is credited with the origination of the Rudra Vina and the Rabab. In any case, he was much fascinated with the melodious sound of these unfretted instruments.

PRELUDE TO GLORY

The great singer later joined the court of Raja Mansingh Tomar, of Gwalior, after whose death he attached himself to the court of Raja Ramachandra Bughela of Bhandavgarh in the former Vindya Pradesh. It was at Bhandavgarh that Tansen rose to real eminence. His fame as a musician spread and Emperor Akbar, hearing of his genius, sent for him. Tansen came to Delhi in 1552 to adorn the court of the Moghul Emperor. His fame as a great musician spread far and wide, and the Emperor, who made it a point to listen to his music daily some time whatever his preoccupation with state

affairs, appointed Tansen the topmost musician of his "Navaratnas" and honoured him with the title of "Tansen" in open court at Delhi.

GOLDEN HERITAGE

Tansen's contributions to Hindustani music have been vast and varied and enduring too. It was he who nurtured it from the recitative to the lyrical stage and elevated its practical side to the highest peak of glory. The ragas put into shape and fashion by him are said to be twelve, each designated either as "Miyan" or "Darbari", the most memorable being his striking Miyan ki Todi, Miyan ki Sarang, Darbari Kanada and Darbari Todi. In a song in Darbari Kanada he pays obeisance to his Guru and says :—

*Jo Guru kripa karan koti pap katar
palchinmon.*

*Guru ki mahima Harison bhori
Ved Puraun sabhi bichari,
Brahma Vyas rate palchinmon.*

(If the Guru is kind thousands of sins
are washed away within seconds.

The Guru's greatness surpasses God's
All the Vedas and Puranas have examined this.
Brahma and Vyasa remember the Guru
ceaselessly.)

His three books on classical Sangeet are a golden heritage which Tansen bequeathed on succeeding generations. Even in the modern world, with its craze for light music, the popularity of Tansen's ragas is such that they are heard at every Hindustani music concert.

LEGENDARY FEATS

The legend has Tansen's sweet songs not only made the trees sway and the rocks incline but could light lamps and

make heavens pour rain on earth. It was in the well known raga, Megh Malhar, that he sang one such song :

*Bijuri chamke, barse menhwa,
Ayi badaria garaj gaaraj
Mahain atihi daraye,
Chhan garaji chhan bijuri chamke,
Papiha piyuke ter sunaye.
Kaha karun, kit jaoon
Mara jiara tarse.*

(Lightning flashes, coming rains and thundering clouds frighten me. Amidst thundering clouds and lightning, the Papiha sings the melodious song of its lover. Oh! what should I do and where should I go? My heart is pining for my beloved!)

When he was at the height of his popularity at Akbar's court, Tansen died in 1589, in Delhi. In deference to his wishes Akbar sent his body to Gwalior, where he was buried next to the grave of his guide and benefactor, Mohammad Ghaus. Silence reigns today over the place where Tansen's mausoleum is located and from time to time one finds

struggling singers sitting reverently near by praying for the blessings of this great musician.

A tamarind tree once stood near the mausoleum and people would come from far and wide to pluck a few leaves, in the belief that those who ate them would become great singers. Only a few withered branches naked of all greenery remain of it today and some small trees that have sprouted from its seeds have met with the same fate. So intense is the belief in the leaves of this legendary tree.

Sangeet Samrat Tansen was once proclaimed by poet Surdas thus :

*Bhaalo bhavo vidhi na diye Seshnag
ke kan
Dhara mairuab dolte Tansen ke tan.*

(Thank God Seshnag is not blessed with ears otherwise the melodies of Tansen would have upset the whole earth and the mountains).

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A GREAT GURU, A KARMA YOGI

January 17, 1990. A great day for the family, for the disciples. Sangeetha Bhushanam T. S. Krishnaswami, the peerless guru, turned 80. His Satabhishekam was celebrated by his kith and kin, at the Asthika Samaj, Matunga.

At the religious function quite a sizeable number of sishyas had gathered to pay their Pranams. What a mighty following he commanded! Pranams we paid through his own medium, i.e., Music. His daughters, and the students, mostly old students, singing in one voice the songs he taught, in absolute synchrony. The whole atmosphere was charged with an aura of Nadopasana.

What a glorious experience it was to be united after decades, almost four! Old time memories flashed through as we started singing. We lost ourselves in the music. Sangati after Sangati mounted; tier by tier we proceeded; no prompting, no cueing. Songs rolled off, one after another in a neat array.

TEACHER PAR EXCELLENCE

Only a couple of days before at an Aradhana, conducted by Shri Tyagaraja Sabha, Vidwan A. S. Panchapakesa Iyer of Bharatiya Music & Arts Society exclaimed when two of us rendered the saint's kriti in Todi, "how could you two sing the song in such precision, Sangati after Sangati, after 43 years? It shows the depth of the Pataantara and disciplined coaching of your teacher."

Such was the reputation our Guru had earned. In the 60 years of his teaching career he has given to Bombay many violinists and vocalists who have

risen to fame in the field of Karnatak music.

Sri T. S. Krishnaswami Iyer graduated from Annamalai University in 1934. One of his Gurus was the renowned Sablesa Iyer. He was proficient not only in vocal and violin but also mastered the languages of Tamil and Telugu. He then took up a teaching job at Delhi. For four years (1937-41), he was attached to the music school run by the Karnatic Sangeetha Sabha, Delhi. He later shifted to Bombay and started his own "Sri Krishna Music Academy" in 1941. The Academy followed the same method as Annamalai University; and he was planning to get it affiliated to the Bombay university. He had three assistants under him.

KARMA YOGI

We had classes six days in a week and senior students had evening sessions where Akaara Sadakam and Pallavi rendition were regularly practised. Saturdays were reserved for theory and examinations were periodically conducted. An institution of such discipline and magnitude was unknown in Bombay at that time. There were only a few teachers who gave private tuitions. The fee too in our Academy was meagre considering the intensive training that was imparted. Once a year the teachers and senior students performed at the annual day functions. It was a memorable experience. We students were also made to sing before vidwans who visited our school from time to time.

Unfortunately owing to some unpleasant developments and 'schemings', this

Karmayogi withdrew from the premises where he was running the Academy and started functioning from home. Indeed it was a great loss to the society because had he continued in the same premises it would have grown into a great institution like Annamalai University in fame and name. Many tried to impede his progress, tried to harm him, but the perfect gentleman that he is, he never even thought or talked ill of them. He went on continuing with his mission — teaching. His patience and steadfastness bore fruit. He has a huge

SYSTEMATISED TRAINING

In 1974 Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha invited him to open a violin department and impart training in their Sangeetha Vidyalaya. He readily agreed and shifted there with all his students. The Sri Krishna Academy was wound up, but rose the Shanmukhananda violin faculty. His methodology, his systematic teaching, his patience, persuasion and perseverance in cultivating interest and knowledge in his students are matters for experience,



Shanmukhananda Sabha felicitating the Guru on his Satabhishekam

sishya parampara, some performing, some teaching and quite a number of them on the rolls of the Akashwani.

To name a few Meenakshi Viswanathan, Gowri Ramakrishnan, her daughter Visalakshi, Kalyani Panchapakesan, Mangala, Ranjani and Gayathri have already made a name as violinists while Vijayalakshmi Nathan, Gomathi and the author are vocalists of mark. His daughters also perform and teach.

not for words. Never have I seen him losing his temper, or using harsh words. Nor has he ever held back anything from us so far as teaching was concerned. He would impart everything we wanted to know, irrespective of our capacity. He never differentiated between average and intelligent students. The attention he paid, the efforts he took were the same to everyone. Mistakes were never left uncorrected. No relaxation until we got it perfect.

Each student had to sing or play alapana, niraval and swaras individually after the lead he gave, and he would guide us, direct us as also correct us whenever and wherever necessary. That gave us not only the courage to sing alone but also by listening to our classmates rendering the same thing according to their imagination and musical acumen, helped us improve our own imagination. The collective build-up of niraval and swaras inspired us not only to strive for something original but also gave confidence to ensure rapport with the accompanists later on when we gave concerts. His comprehensive method of teaching, with the notation forming a necessary part of it, and a step-by-step guidance at each stage had so firmly registered in our minds that when some of us later started teaching the system came most natural to us.

He used to be a very good performer too, but his mission as a teacher left him very little time for his own practice. He has a vast repertoire, and he taught a variety of kritis, from the Trinity and other composers, Ragamalikas, Pallavis and Tillanas etc., in Sanskrit, Telugu and

Tamil. He set Bharatiyar's songs and Kamban's verses to beautiful tunes. He taught us all and encouraged us to participate in competitions and to perform. Personally, I went under his tutelage at a very young age and benefited a lot. In fact, the foundation he laid is so strong that nothing can shake it even at this age. It will only get strengthened as the years roll by.

SWEET SERVICE

I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention about his wife Srimathi Ranganayaki. Behind every successful man, there is a woman, so goes the saying. And she is that. She has been with him throughout, silently supporting, always remaining at the background. The couple are made for each other. To us, our Guru-Patni has been sweet-smile personified. Very sweet, affectionate and warm, she would always welcome us with a sweet smile. We pray to Almighty that the couple be blessed with many more years of sweet service to music.

— Minakshi Muralidhar

SHANMUKHA

Wishes Its Readers

A HAPPY TAMIL NEW YEAR

'SANKARABHARANAM' NARASIER

The terms, Property, Surrender, Mortgage, Pledge, Gift, Security, Actionable Claim, Chose in action, and the like have been the subject of volumes of enactments, case-law and treatises. Tyagaraja *relinquishes* his right to sing or compose in raga Ananda Bhairavi. Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar says *Giripai* is the property of Bikshandar-koil Subbarayar and that he would not touch it as it would be sacrilege. "Todi" Sitaramier mortgages the raga and takes a loan on the understanding that he would desist from singing in that raga till he repays the loan. "Sankarabharanam" Narasier does likewise and takes a loan — pledging his right to sing in that raga. The legal aspect would be the subject-matter of scrutiny elsewhere under 'Intellectual Property.'

Rajah Serfoji of Tanjore was one of the great rulers of India, great not by the extent of their empire as Ashoka, Chandragupta or Akbar but by the enormity of their patronage to art, architecture, sculpture and particularly music. It was the good fortune of Narasier that he happened to give a concert before the royal connoisseur. His exposition of the raga Sankarabharanam (Jewel of Lord Sankara) was so scintillating that the royal court with its brimful of artistes was transported to the Ocean of Bliss and the cultured ruler Serfoji honoured the musician with the title of "Sankarabharanam". What else could be a better attribute? The artiste had probably shouted '*Veni, vidi, vici!*' Sankarabharanam Narasier shot into fame and that particular raga came to be the *sine quo non* of his concerts.

Years passed. At successive concerts the *piece de resistance* (his *tour de force*) was conspicuous by its absence. Requests were of no avail. Finally, it was a performance at the residence of Wallace Appu Rayar, Kumbakonam. The large audience and the host insisted on his singing in Sankarabharanam. The musician explained that he could not sing in that raga. Pressed for the reason, he said, "It is mortgaged."

"Mortgaged? How can a raga be pledged? Perplexing."

Narasier explained what happened :

"I was in need of money. My self-respect prevented my going to anyone. Finally I thought of Ramabhadra Moopanar of Kabistalam. When I went to him, of course, with a heavy heart, he made the usual enquiries. Then I told him, 'Unexpectedly I have to incur a large expenditure. I felt ashamed to approach anyone. Your name came to my mind. So I have come here to take a 'LOAN':

Moopanar : Loan? How much?
 Narasier : Eighty Sovereigns.
 Moopanar : You want a 'loan'. Security?
 Narasier : Yes — A jewel! ...
 Moopanar : Let me see it.
 Narasier : You cannot see that jewel. You can only hear it. You take my 'Sankarabharanam' as security. I undertake not to sing it till I have discharged the loan."

Evidently he was aware of Todi Sitaramier's dealings in "intellectual property'. The deed was executed and the loan given. Narasier could not discharge the loan and retrieve the raga. His concerts were 'Hamlet without the Prince.' The disappointment and dismay among his admirers and his own pang and pain could easily be imagined. Thank God, the Seat of Culture, Kumbakonam pinned him down to account for his refusal to sing and brought the deal to light.

Immediately a party left with the amount to Kabistalam and returned not only with the cancelled deed but also Moopanar. Before the enlightened assemblage of friends and music-lovers, Moopanar said :

"Narasier had the privilege to demand and take the amount. But when he pressed for a Loan, I felt slighted and was embittered. I regret I had taken the security of the raga. With my apology, I return not only the loan amount and interest but am adding my presents too. I am glad Narasier's nobility and integrity now stand revealed to the world not only for his art but as a modern Harischandra!"

Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Ayyar has mentioned that Narasier was with Udayarpalayam Zamindar, Yuvaranga Bhoopati and when he learnt about the mortgage, the Zamindar cleared the dues. He has added that Narasier was a traditionalist (Sampradaya and Lakshana Vidwan).

The plighted word was honoured. The loan was redeemed. A rich dividend greeted the elite of the town the next day when Narasier came out with his mastery in Sankarabharanam which shone in all its resplendent glory with

added spark and spurt. (It may be mentioned here that Ramabhadra Moopanar has been praised by Ghanam Krishna Ayyar also.)

The incidents of Sankarabharanam Narasier and Todi Sitaramier reveal :

- i. Poverty & indebtedness were inseparable assets and bed-fellows of Genius;
- ii. Musicians were great only in fame but in old times were poor, positively poor and totally poor — e.g., Tyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar to mention the prime architects or Gopala Krishna Bharati or even recently Subramanya Bharati;
- iii. Self-respect, self-control and self-knowledge in keeping with *Nidhi Chala Sukhama* of Tyagaraja held the field then; and
- iv. Music was considered sacred. The plighted word was sacrosanct, not to be compromised even in adversity and loss of profession.

Brandeis in his book *Other People's Money* mentions :

'Sunlight is the best of infectants, Electric light the most efficient policeman.'

Let us add :

"The plighted word of a true artiste is the best of securities."

— (Excerpt from the book *A Garland of Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers & Musicians*. By N. Rajagopalan, IAS (Retd.)

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON BHARATANATYAM DANCE TRADITIONS

By
P. K. SRINIVASAN, B.Sc.

The Sruti Foundation, Madras, conducted a 6-day National Seminar on Bharatanatyam Dance Traditions at the Narada Gana Sabha auditorium during December 1989. Its purpose was to document the specific contributions and characteristics of the dance Paramparas of senior Nattuvanars hailing from traditional dance families. The intention was to make available the textual, photographic and audio-video documentations to important national collections.

The Foundation had chosen Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai, K. P. Kittappa Pillai, T. K. Mahalingam Pillai, V. S. Muthuswamy Pillai and K. N. Dakshinamoorthy Pillai representing his brother late Dandayudapani Pillai's school. Further, the Foundation had decided to award every year in memory of late Sri E. Krishna Iyer a medal to one who has made significant contribution to the preservation and promotion of Bharatanatyam traditions. Smt. Kamala was selected for the first (1989) award.

There were three sessions every day. Morning sessions were devoted to presentation of basic *Adavus* and movements which are part of the concerned parampara, followed by demonstration of practical repertoire. Afternoons were utilised for delineating and documenting how successors or associates of these Nattuvanars had handled the art. And evening sessions were reserved for

dance recitals by their disciples as practical illustrations.

FLOATING MOVEMENTS

The opening lecture-demonstration was by V. S. Muthuswamy Pillai of Vaitheeswarankoil. The Guru explained the necessity for specific exercises to add grace and flexibility to the dancer, like staying in the *Aramandi* posture for long duration; leaping forward and backward, jumping on toes etc., to get springiness and maintenance of stability. He also demonstrated some of the changes he has incorporated in the *adavus* to impart a more graceful and floating-like movements.

He is the pioneer to introduce Mallari as an opening number, as a good substitute for the Melaprapti, of ancient times. He stressed that compositions fit for female dancers do not suit well for male dancers and hence great care must be taken while selecting songs for males. His French disciple Delorme Dominique demonstrated this aspect quite ably and danced well, drawing series of applause.

A word of praise about his make-up and dress is worth mentioning in this context as this aspect is the most neglected one in the case of male dancers.

On the second day, K. P. Kittappa Pillai demonstrated the innovations he

has introduced in the basic *adavus* giving more freedom to the dancer to cover the whole stage and moving in all the eight directions. He has also split up *adavus* for the purpose of easily building up footwork. He practically demonstrated how Jatiswarams were composed for dances. Here the Jatis were first determined and then suitable swaras chosen synchronising with the Jatis. To heighten the *Rasaanubhava* he stated that the special features of the particular deity or the *Kshetra* (the place) have to be shown while doing *Sanchari* for a composition in praise of that deity. By way of illustration he cited that while portraying Tyagesa of Tiruvarur one should show the crescent moon on both sides since this deity alone is adorned with two crescent moons. His disciple Srividya Natarajan executed many complicated footwork with ease and grace drawing ovations.

PLEASING BLEND

The Vazhuvoor style is a pleasant combination of Pandanallur and Kanchipuram styles and a vibrant fusion of *natya* and *abhinaya*, with well-co-ordinated movements of the *angas* and *upangas*. The composition *Natanam Adinar* was introduced by Ramaiah Pillai which has become so popular a hit that it has been made a 'must' in each dancer's repertoire. So too credit goes to him for re-introducing the "Mandooka Sabdham" in Bharatanatyam dance. As an innovator he has got many firsts to his credit.

His disciple Sri S. K. Rajaratnam presented some Mallaris through his students. He is responsible for converting the Kambhodi Raga Sabdham into a Ragamalika, thereby breaking the mo-

notonous repetitions. The fine *abhinaya* of Vidhya Subramanian for *Netrandi Neraththile* was noteworthy.

CREATIVE GENIUS

The lec-dem on the contribution of the late K. N. Dandayudapani Pillai was undertaken by his brother Dakshinamurthy on the fourth day. Dandayudapani had composed many dance-dramas in addition to different varieties of dance compositions which breath his innovative spirit. His *Kalpana* knew no bounds. This was amply illustrated in the *Alarippu* wherein he had incorporated the *Shodasopachaara* as *Aranga Aradhana*, *Ashtadikpala Vandana* and worship of all principal deities. So also in portraying the *Dasavataras*. In the case of *Varaahaavatara*, for instance, squint eyes were used. *Vaamana* walked with bended knees to show his short stature and then the dancer slowly and majestically rose to the erect standing posture indicating the growth of *Trivikrama* and with a *Suchi hasta* in the right hand reminded Mahabali that one more step of measurement was due for which he had to show the place! So much for his creative genius.

The two Mysore schools, *Mugur* and *Kadur*, were demonstrated by Madhava Rao and Dr. Venkatalakshamma. The former gave importance to *Nritta* and the latter to *abhinaya*. Here, the *adavus* had their own individuality, quite distinct from the established *Tanjore* style. In the traditional performance of Mysore school a dance recital started with a *Sloka* followed by a *Choornika*, *Thodayamangalam*, *Natyamangalam* and *Melaprapthi*, as prelude. Even now the *Mangalam* is sung in the beginning itself and not at the end.

SYSTEMATIC & STREAMLINED

Guru T. K. Mahalingam Pillai (Bombay) demonstrated the traditional initiation and imparting of the first lessons to new entrant and also explained the significance behind. He gave a comparative study of the various *adavus* that were in vogue and the new ones innovated by him. He illustrated the building up of *Korvais* from the elementary ones and how they could be incorporated in Alarippu, rounding offs, *Theer-manams* etc. While indicating *Devata Lakshana* he pointed out some subtle traits. For example, Vishnu is depicted with feet in *Swastika* (crossed) with both hands bearing *Tripataka*, and in case of Krishna, the *Dhrishti* is to be a *Saachi* (side glance towards the right side) while keeping the *Mrigasheersha* hasta in both hands. The position of the *Kapitha* hasta at chest or shoulder level distinguishes Mahalakshmi and Lakshmi etc.

The two Rajalakshmis of Tiruvidaimarudur (crossed 70) were presented before the audience. The first one did abhinaya for the Padam *Vanda Kaariyam*. The other, the foremost disciple of the late Kuppiyah Pillai, danced by way of demonstration, a few passages from the dance-drama "Sarabendra Bhoopala Kuravanji" and stunned the audience by her 'youthful' suppleness and subtlety even at this age! The fruit of the rigorous training she had undergone! As a climax came Sri T. K. Mahalingam's abhinaya for the Bhairavi Varnam *Mohamana*. Later there was a demonstration by his brother K. Kalyanasundaram and his students.

On the concluding day there was a panel discussion by dancers like Kala-

nidhi Narayanan, Sucheta Chapekar, Chitra Visweswaran, Lakshmi Viswanathan, Sudharani Raghupathi, Vani Ganapathi, Saroja Vaidyanathan, Meenakshi Chittaranjan, Leela Ramanathan and U. S. Krishna Rao — all not belonging to the traditional Nattuvanar community.

DISCREPANCIES

A good beginning has been made, and there is much scope for improvement and making the Seminar useful. As it is, the Seminar was in the nature of projecting the individual Nattuvanar's method of approach and teaching technique. As such there was little room for discussions. The Sruti Foundation had stated clearly that its present effort was preparing documentation — textual, photographic and audio-video — for the sake of posterity. Some discrepancies were discernible and they have been documented. For example, while doing the Mandooka Sabdham which is also known as Gajendramoksha Sabdham, Smt. Rhadha portrayed Vamana with her right hand held high at shoulder level and the left hand hanging down with *mushti* hastas. But this should have been the other way, signifying Kaman-dalu held in the right hand hanging down and an umbrella held high in the left. The definition also runs like this!

*Oordwaadho dhrthamushtibhyaam
Savyaamyabhyaam Yadhi
Sthithaha!
Sa Vaamanaavathaarasya
Hastha ithyabhidheeyathey!!*

NECESSARY CORRECTIONS

Since this has been documented for the benefit of posterity to rely as an

authoritative reference, correction should be incorporated so that there would not be any room for misconception.

In the abhinaya of Dr. Venkatalakshamma too, in the Choornika for *Nee-lakantapriyam*, *Tripataka* hasta was shown. In the Saveri Padam depicting Proshitabhartruka while interpreting *Lajja thaarajena Peethaasruni chakshusa*, the stars were shown for *Thaaraka*, whereas in fact the meaning conveyed is the pupil of the eye showing bashfulness. Again, *Kisaasi* is interpreted as one very lean whereas the meaning is eating very little (from the Sanskrit root *Asnaathe* meaning eats) thereby showing her aversion to food. The *Krishna-karnamritha* Sloka, "*Oorvyaam kopi*" is not narrated by Lakshmi as stated by the artist, but is the outspoken statement of a gopi directly addressed to Krishna. In this for

the word *Maheedharo* meaning a mountain, it is not clear why a *Sikhara* hasta was shown. Again there is a textual error in the Sloka. It is *Govardhanodhaarakaha* (one who has lifted the Govardhana mountain) and not *Govardhano geeyathey* (praised as Govardhana — as was sung, and documented). The latter does not convey any sense, though one may argue as a *Paatabheda* found in some book not critically edited.

The Sruti Foundation must review all the documented items, whether textual, or audio-video, by a panel of experts in the field of dance and incorporate corrections/explanations before passing them to the posterity as authoritative ones to be relied upon, or else they would be doing a disservice to the cause of tradition and in this process moving in the opposite direction of their cherished goal.

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KRISHNA IN DANCE

By
INDU RAMAN

The present decline in standards of dance and stagnation of thematic content was indirectly brought into sharp focus by the performances of gurus in the field. Nalanda Dance Research Centre of Bombay conducted a four-day Seminar from 5th to 8th March, 1990. Krishna, the saviour of the world in turmoil, descended once again as the saviour of our dance heritage. "Krishna In Dance" was the theme of the seminar and He shone in a myriad forms, transporting students, scholars, dancers and critics into the days of yore.

MAGNIFICENT MAHALINGAM

The grand septuagenarian Guru Shri T. K. Mahalingam Pillai gave an outstanding demonstration of Krishna as Child, Friend, Lover and Protector. Chosen with care and imagination, the items were illustrative of the various Nayikas and the significant events in Krishna's life. With the magic of his art, Mahalingam Pillai transformed himself into Yashoda, Radha and a playful Krishna. The vivid imagery that he could create with an economy of gesture and movement should have humbled the advocates of loud and complex pyrotechnics of today.

JAGANNATH CULT

Although the style of Odissi existed in the Shaivite shrines of Bhubaneswar since the 10th century A.D., it was danced to the accompaniment of veena and

the Maddalam only. Vocal accompaniment to the Devadasi's dance during the temple rituals began two centuries later with Jayadeva's *Geeta Govind*. These Ashtapadis were thenceforth an inseparable part of the Jagannath cult, bringing Krishna into Odissi dance. Sri Chaitanya's follower Ramananda Patnaik was an erudite Vaishnava scholar, poet, musician and dancer. He is credited with introducing Abhinaya and taught the Devadasis to enact the *Geeta Govind*. Thus the core of abhinaya in Odissi is the Krishna theme. D. N. Patnaik traced the history of Odissi dance from its origin. Mayadhar Raut demonstrated several Ashtapadis as illustration.

KATHAK & KRISHNA

Jeevan Pani, an eminent scholar from Orissa and now associated with Kathak Kendra, Delhi, gave an illuminating talk on the Krishna legend and Kathak. Dwelling at length on the idealistic concept of Radha and Krishna, he explained that the concept must not be reduced to mere characters. There are several analogies to explain the highly complex and infinitely subtle relationship between the two. Like sugar without sweetness is meaningless, the two are inseparable. This complexity is thus resolved by having the simple symbolic comparison to a Radha in love with Krishna, and her constant yearning to be united with Him.

Kathak, in its initial phase was a kind of mimetic recitation of Puranic literature probably embellished with dance passages. The earliest mention of Kathak as an art is found in the Arjuna-Vanvasa chapter of *Mahabharata*. There is reason to believe that the Kathak dance has unmistakable relations with the Rasa Leela, a musical theatre form grown out of the rich Krishna tradition of the Mathura region.

VIVACIOUS SITARA

The royal patronage of Kathak during the 17th century introduced a good deal of secular elements and sophistication. At this phase of its development, Kathak drew inspiration from percussion music. A romantic flavour crept into an expressional dance with increasing demand for dance as a means of entertainment. While courtesans used Kathak to enhance their singing, the male dance teachers continued to compose on Krishna themes. Jeevan Pani's scholarly exposition was followed by a scintillating demonstration by the Kathak Queen, Sitara Devi.

Endearing herself to the youngsters in front of her, Sitara Devi seemed to draw her strength and vigour from them as she gave a vivacious display of her histrionic talents. Pleading ill-health yet surging with energy, she brought to life a flamboyant Krishna in Gokul and Brindavan. Pradeep (vocal) and Fazal Qureishi (Tabla) were inspired to give of their best as Sitara danced with gay abandon.

"SPELL" OF SATYANARAYANA

A rare sight in this important cultural centre, a few lucky Bombayites had an

opportunity to see Vedantam Sri Satyanarayana Sarma. He is famous for his portrayal of the important female role of Satyabhama in the Kuchipudi traditional dance-drama, *Bhamakalapam*. Having enjoyed seeing him dance in his youth, one felt that Satyabhama, as played by him today, has lost many of the charming mannerisms which are so essential to this character. The sophistication of urban stage presentations and Spic-Macay type of lectures have reduced many of these great artists into giving robot-like performances. Robbed of the rustic flavour in costume, music and presentation, much of Kuchipudi magic is lost. Satyanarayana's demonstration comprised scenes from *Krishna Sabdam*, *Vipra Narayana*, and *Bhama Pravesham*.

While Manipuri is severely restricted in the use of Abhinaya the Krishna theme is an intrinsic part of their life and culture. In Manipur, dance and music are a form of worship. For these Vaishnavites, and followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Krishna is a living legend. Guru Singhajit Singh explained this spiritual involvement of his people with transparent sincerity. His wife Charu Sila assisted him in the demonstration.

KRISHNANATTAM

Kathakali, with its powerful emphasis on abhinaya proved itself to be an ideal vehicle for portraying the various aspects of Krishna's glory. The import of *Geeta Govinda* from Orissa was responsible for the resurgence of the Krishna theme all over Kerala. The influence of this love-poem can be seen even today when these songs are sung in the temples here. In Krishnanattam the philosophy makes its devotional flow with an intensity which is beyond the meaning

communicated by words. As compared to this in Kathakali the meaning is enacted so as to create a dramatic impact. The romantic connotation in the concept, however, cannot be qualified without its spiritual relevance.

Kavalam Sri Narayana Panikker, in his paper on the subject, elucidated on the devotees' feelings towards Krishna, as in the case of Draupadi, Poothana and Kubja. Dr. Kanak Rele then gave an impressive recital featuring Krishna in an Ashtapadi, a dialogue between Panchali and Krishna, and the ever popular *Puthana Moksham*. The vocal accompaniment by Gireesan greatly enhanced the performance. Panikker later took the opportunity to plead for the restoration of Sopana style of music, which, he felt, was more suitable to Kathakali and Mohini Attam.

The grand finale to the seminar was the excellent demonstration by Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair. Gopalakrishnan, a Nalanda faculty member, also enacted the secondary roles with his guru. Scenes from *Rukmini Kalyanam*, *Subhadra Haranam*, *Puthana Moksham* and *Kamsa Vadam* successfully brought out the quintessence of the Krishna legend.

ORGANISATIONAL HAZARDS

The success of a seminar depends on the theme, slick organisation, quality of participants and the active interaction between the gurus, scholars, dancers and the students. Allied issues which need attention and focus must also be brought to light. This seminar was plagued with last minute absences, delayed sessions and a bad sound system. Much time was lost in juggling

with the mikes (of which there were only two), between the main speaker and the musicians. The Krishna theme, too, is a time-worn, cliché-ridden one about which nothing new or enlightening was said. Thus the onus of making this exercise a success rested squarely on the participants. They rose magnificently to the occasion. All of them offered words of advice and wisdom to the ardent young students.

JUGALBANDHI

Answering questions, Mahalingam Pillai pleaded for maintaining the individuality of the various styles. Jugalbandhis were as incompatible as garlic in *sambar*, or asafoetida in *pulao*, he quipped! Mayadhar Raut, reiterating the same sentiment, said these innovations have been brought in for mass appeal. Sitara Devi admitted that she has learnt the other styles too, but only for her own education. She deplored the lack of guru-bhakti in present day students. Students are so lucky because of the excellent facilities for learning, but without dedication and devotion, their art will never rise to great heights, she admonished. There was much to learn from the humility of Vedantam Satyanarayana, who had subjugated his entire personality to the role which he has been playing all his life. Ramankutty Nair ruled out excessive *lok dharmi* in dance although the scope is limitless.

The students and faculty members of Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya were given an opportunity to display their skills. Mention must be made of Guru T. V. Sounderarajan and Shri Atibudhi who showed rare grace and devotion while dancing an Ashtapadi.

CULTURAL SCENE IN BOMBAY

The cultural scene for the New Year 1990 opened up fluttering its eyelids to experience the violin recital of Dr. L. Shankar, the US based renowned violinist. Indeed, CBS had rightly chosen the Shanmukhananda auditorium as the venue for this well-attended grand affair. Although Dr. L. Subramaniam was scheduled for the concert, he could not make it, thanks to our Airlines' schedule! His brother was therefore called in to fill the bill which he performed in creditable colour and credentials.

Notwithstanding the experiments, innovative exuberance, research and combination of Western Jazz etc., that he dabbles in, Dr. Shankar is basically a traditionalist. Perhaps the element of fervour, devotion and pure classicism may not be available for a meticulous scanning. But Indian rhythm gets a dominant manifestation in his performance. The fibre-glass two-in-one violin that he has designed is well under his command responding to his deft fingers. The octaves from 'Anu-mandara' to 'Atithara' heights are very skilfully handled so as to bring out the depth and greatness of Indian melodic strands.

Kiravani which was taken up for a Pallavi was stately in form and the Sancharas in Mandara Sthayi snatched a few thrilling moments for pleasant reminiscences. The absence of Mridangam was keenly felt although two Ustads, Allah Rakha and son Fazal Qureshi, provided for rhythmic support, teamed with the inimitable Vikku on Ghatam. All said and done, Mridangam

is supreme for Karnatak Music numbers. The rest of the percussion instruments are at best subsidiary.

T. R. Subramaniam's recital on second Saturday (aegis: Shanmukhananda Sabha) was literally a mixed bag. The performance offered more of rhythm and swaraprasthara. In the process, melody got a back seat. Swarasthanas in Abhogi were emphasised in a raw and virile fashion with the result emotional appeal was found rather wanting. Quantity of Sargams was stretched too far. "Grihabalamemi" (Revagupti) was well rendered. Kalyani alapana was elaborately attended to where the artiste traversed with ease in the higher registers. Pallavi in Kanda-gathi was dovetailed in good rhythm. The libretto, however, appeared rather crowded in the Uttaranga portion, thereby affecting free scope for Niraval.

P. Sundararajan of AIR, Delhi, on violin gave an excellent support. Rather young but abundantly mature in performance, he holds out good promise in the professional arena. Trichur Mohan gave passable supporting rhythm; but his performance was not any beyond school level exercises. Vaikom Gopalakrishnan (Ghatam) added good muscle to percussion what with his professional experience.

The vocal recital of Seeta Narayanan on January 27 pointed to the artist's clear and well practised voice, in terms of traditional procedure. A Varnam in Behag (Dr. Ramanathan's composition), "Panchamatanga" (Malahari) "Ammaramamma" (Kalyani) and "Kanakkankoti"

(Kambhoji) were a few of the outstanding items. True to her guru Dr. Ramana-
than's school convention and faultless
procedure were available in her rendi-
tion satisfying the technical pundit. But
artistic efflorescence has an exclusiv-
ness of its own. Lakshya for a perfor-
mance should work its way to steal the
show where Lakshana plays only a com-
plementary but necessary role.

The climax at the month end was the
rhythm ensemble presented by T. S.
Nandakumar, a Teaching faculty mem-
ber of Mridangam, of Shanmukhananda
Sabha. Young talented tots in the age
group 7 to 16 were the 'ustads' in the
scenario. While melody refrain were
provided by three senior professionals
on flute, veena and violin (P. S. Murthy,
Lalitha Bharadwaj, and Vanamala Dik-
shit) delineating rich classical numbers
like Sahana Varnam, "Vatapiganapa-
thim" (Hamsadhvani), "Palimsukamak-
shi (Madhyamavati) and a Pallavi (San-
karabharanam), the young men in the
'building up' contributed supporting
percussion. It was an excellent item
where perfect team work, rhythmic
precision, elegant 'Korvais' and effec-
tive culmination with characteristic cre-
scendo were straight available. Kudos
to T. S. Nandakumar for his unerring
identification of promising students and
tireless hours of coaching put by him.

Sunday, February 11, featured the
recital of S. R. Balasubramaniam, a di-
sciple of Papanasam Sivan. It was an
'anjali' in reverence to the composer in
that the disciple sang throughout only
Sivan's compositions. The recital was
full of raga bhava. Latangi, Karahara-
priya and Shanmukhapriya were very
competently handled. The vocalist's
voice covered three registers with ease

and the melody delineated was com-
plete in form in the traditional sense.
Baby Gayatri, the precocious product of
Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya
under the grooming of T. S. Krishna-
swami provided Violin accompaniment
with remarkable skill and confidence.
Her raga concepts are very clear and
one feels refreshed to say. "She came,
she saw, she conquered". Young Arun
Prakash on Mridangam revealed a fine
standard as an accompanist.

The Mini auditorium programmes for
February featured Lalitha Bharadwaj's
Veena recital and P. E. Geetha's Vocal.
Lalitha's was a good classical program-
me. A good gnanabhava and an effec-
tive presentation technique were distin-
ctly noticeable. Kalyani was well deli-
neated. P. S. Murthy and P. Sridhar
gave good rhythm support on Mridan-
gam and Ghatam respectively.

The vocal recital of Geetha was well
attended. Geetha clicks well with a
clean rendering of compositions. She
provides embellishments without any
craze for flamboyant frills; neither is
there any overdoze of Kalpana swaras.
She has a satisfactory voice depth and
proceeds with her musical numbers on
a good rhythmic base. Her mentor,
Smt. T. R. Balamani's grooming has ef-
fectively gone into Geetha's 'build up'.
In performing arts, the term 'guru' is
very significant and Geetha is indeed
fortunate to have the correct one.
Geetha's Shanmukhapriya and Arabhi
registered well. Sowmya Subbaraman
and Sankaranarayanan gave good sup-
port on Violin and Mridangam.

During January, Tyagaraja Aradhana,
Shyama Sastri and Purandaradasa Days
were celebrated in the Mini auditorium.

Many Bombay-based artists participat-
ed, each giving music for a duration of
half an hour. It is to make specific
mention that Kum. Anita Seshadri made
an excellent impact as she sang the
compositions of Shyama Sastri. Gifted
with a voice that carries an in-built feli-
city for musical melody, Anita poured
out a good level of competence. Melo-
dy and rhythm as though glide in and
out in supreme abandon. Needless to
mention that a refinement has gone into
the grooming of Anita's potential. Her
guru, Smt. Sulochana Nagarajan, de-
serves rich tributes for her sincere and
well-meaning effort.

A Hindusthani Music recital arranged
under the auspices of Bharatiya Music
& Arts Society as the inaugural session
of its Annual Festival was a pleasant
experience for recollection. A scholar
and well-balanced performing musi-
cian, so to put it, Dr. Srinivasan — the
artiste under reference — gave an elab-
orate delineation of Puryadhanasri fol-
lowed by a Khayal in Vilambit and Drut.
While his voice was tuneful, it was ra-
ther short of volume and grandeur —
an equipment that is usually taken for
granted for a senior ustad. However,
good artistic potential was throughout
evident in his recital. Facile sweeps
from one Sthayi to another while hand-

ling Alap were remarkably negotiated.
Well done, Doctor Saheb! Sri Patwar-
dhan (Harmonium) and Sadanand Na-
yampalli (Tabla teacher of Shanmukha-
nanda Sangeetha Vidyalaya) gave com-
plementary support for the concert. Sa-
danand's rhythmic 'bols' have a good
clarity and point to a dependable and
helpful cushion which any musician
would lovingly look forward to.

Sriram Group of Companies had
arranged a recital of T. N. Seshagopa-
lan along with Hariprasad Chaurasia
at Shanmukhananda Hall on Feb. 25.
The performance was one of those rou-
tine types, quite characteristic of him.
Notwithstanding his abundant potential,
one wonders why his music fails to
touch the heart strings. Perhaps,
Seshagopalan may give a fresh look at
the fineness of his artistic output and
redefine his aesthetic parameters to-
wards ensuring a sustained attention on
the part of the listening public. He is a
young musician with good innings ahead
under excellent promise; why not
therefore fashion out an idiom rather
rich in emotional fervour? It was felt,
accompanists of a better standard could
have been arranged for the concert. No
doubt, Praveen of Bangalore did a re-
deeming role.

S. Ramachandran

Pondering over 'innovation', a pet
concept with modern artistes, Indu
Raman, a Bharata Natyam danseuse of
Kalakshetra mould had this to ask :

"Have we exhausted the ocean of traditional
heritage? Should we go beyond tradition or
innovate within accepted norms of classi-
cism?"

She provided the answer too — in-
novate by depicting new themes and
draw from new composers. (Vide
SHANMUKHA July, 1989).

Incidentally, Indu ruminated over
what it is "that a dancer seeks in music
that can inspire one to give it move-
ment and mimetic expression." Is it

the tune or the rhythm to which one automatically responds or "is it sentiment which tugs at our heart and moves us to express it? Or does a well-loved piece... urge one to dance to it in a known format?" And she found a wealth of 'inspiration' in Saint Thyagaraja who, she says, is "all this and more."

Making an exhaustive study of the Thyagaraja Kritis, which breath "intense religious fervour, divine love, tender pathos... with a charm of clever play of words", Indu has discovered Varnams, Padams, Javalis, Bhajans etc., among his kritis and given them dance visualisation.

The very title "Sumathi Thyagaraja" carries an intellectual aura. Avoiding the frills and trappings of a dance ballet she has in this 'Ekartha' (Solo) delineation portrayed select facets of his life, covering a gamut of emotions through his compositions, familiar and rare. The selection has been made with an eye on the variety of compositions he had composed. And Bhava evocation, that is the essence of the kritis, was the highlight of her choreography and dance too.

Besides the Varali Pancharatnam, "Swararagasudha" (Sankarabharam), which unfolds the origin of the Saptaswaras and the Rasas they evoke, the title song "Nidhi Chala Sukhama" (Kalyani), "Nadupai" (Madhyamavati), and "Giripai" (Sahana), there were rare gems like "Namo Namo Raghavayya" (Desya Todi), the first song the Saint composed, "Meiukovayya" (Bauji) an Utsava Sampradaya Keerthana, "Chelimini Jalajakshu" (Yadukula Kambhoji) from *Prahlada Bhakti Vija-*

yam, "Chalu Chalu" (Saveri) from *Nauka Charitram* and Sthala Kritis — all of which brought into sharp focus the moments of agony and ecstasy in the Saint's life.

With the moving melody of Sushila Raman and Guru Adyar Lakshmanan, the presentation gave the Saint's Kritis a 3-D projection. A well-timed anjali Shanmukhananda Sabha organised to coincide with the Saint's Aradhana.

The dance suite for February was filled by Ramji Sisters, Madhumita and Poornashiri, students of Uma Dandayudapani, daughter of the late Dandayudapani Pillai who had enriched the Bharata Natyam repertoire after the Tanjore Quartet by composing various numbers for the Margam. Besides his compositions (Varnam and Padam), the sisters' repertoire comprised Bharatiyar verses, bhajans etc.

Bharatiya in its annual festival presented a young dancer from among the local talents. Kesari Sadashiv Rao, of Nrithya Geethanjali, going through a number of heavy pieces of Nritta and Abhinaya showed that she has arrived. Talent, training and disciplined honing have helped her acquire a sustaining eloquence, a refined expression and an easy abandon. And her keen observations have given her enunciation a touch of individuality.

A rare Ramayana Varnam from Prasanna Venkatadasa's Kannada lyrics, her Guru Rajee Narayan's Sabdam and Padam, selections from *Soundaryalahari* and Bharatiyar's song made the recital varied and sumptuous.

Among the NCPA dance presentations, Lata Pada's Bharata Natyam would be marked as a class by itself,

for, here was a danseuse who had been off the dance mainstream for quite a long time (nearly two decades), who could keep in touch with the training only in 'crash courses' during home vacation stints; and yet her solo (March) reflected her single-minded devotion and dedication.

Sure of her steps and sure of her sentiments she gave her exposition the 'feel of the character, and the feel of her individuality.' Restraint and refined artistry were the scoring point in her dance which comprised among other numbers Gopalakrishna Bharati's "Sabhapatikku" (Abhogi), a Varnam depict-

Restraint and refined artistry were the highlight of another dance feature, "Sindhu", a ballet depicting the culture of Mohenjo-Daro presented at Birla Matushri Sabhagrah. Fired with an ambition to do something new, Kathak dancer Anila Sunder who had choreographed ballets on Sindhi festivals and love lores, found the dance figurine of Mohenjo-Daro and the Veena-like 2-stringed instrument with a bridge (meru) of Harappa enough inspiration to venture into a ballet. In the "Great Bath", a characteristic feature of the ancient civilisation, she discovered some semblances to the ritual of bath of the Nair community of Kerala.



Advanced class students of the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya with the Doyen Semmangudi Srinivasier at Narada Gana Sabha, Madras.

ing Lord Krishna as the "Mahabharata Nayaka," the songstructure adopted from Vidwan A. S. Panchapakesa Iyer's Varnam in Suddha Dhanyasi, and the Sahitya composed by her Guru K. Kalyanasundaram.

One could single out two numbers not so far handled by the Rajarajeswari School, viz., Todayamangalam and Parasakthi Tillana, opening with Sahitya.

The result was an imaginative story of two cultures — Aryan and Dravidian, upholding two contrasting ideals, 'Veera' and 'Kala' respectively, and both unyielding and unable to integrate, fall a prey to natural calamity. The Aryan hero and the Dravidian heroine (Sindhu), their unrequited love, the 'seasons', the harvest, the bath etc., furnish enough material for a dance ballet.

Simple lyrics, melodious, recorded music, near-period, costumes and above all 'Sathvik' dance, adhering to no particular technique but having classical stances, effectively choreographed with some folk flavour, made it a refreshing production.

Melodious and moving strains of Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Navavarna Kritis rent the air on Yugadi Day (March 27) at Anushaktinagar where the Composers' Day was celebrated by the Bhakta Rasika Ranjani Sabha. The

rendition by a group of advanced class students of the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya, viz., Prema Krishnan, Janaki Swamy, Renuka Rajan, S. Srinivasan and S. Kasturi Rangan, was led by Smt. Kalyani Sarma, the teacher in the Vidyalaya.

The Gananjali was not only meant to be an initiation of the members into 'the feel of the great gems' but it also served as an incentive to go into them in a big way.

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"வாழ்க்கையோடு இணைந்த ஜீவன்..."

(சென்னை ஸங்கீத வித்வத் சபை 63-வது மகாநாட்டில்

வித்வான் ஸ்ரீ மகாராஜபுரம் ஸந்தானம் அவர்களின்

தலைமை உரையிலிருந்து)

ஸம்ப்ரதாயமான சுத்தமான ஸங்கீதத் திற்குப் புகழ் பெற்றவரும், கர்நாடக ஸங்கீத உலகின் பரிபூர்ணமான அபிமானத் தையும், நன்மதிப்பையும் பெற்றவருமான ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி பட்டம்மாள் அவர்கள் நான் தலைமை வகிக்கவிருக்கும் இந்த 63வது மகாநாட்டை துவக்கி வைத்ததை என்னுடைய பெரும் பாக்கியமாகவே கருதுகிறேன்.

கர்நாடக ஸங்கீத வித்வான்களுக்கு, வாழ்க்கையில் குறிப்பிடத்தக்க வாய்ப்புக்கள் பல ஏற்படும். நிறைய திருப்பு முனைகளும் வரும். மிகப் பெரிய கௌரவங்களும், பாராட்டுகளும் கிடைக்கும். ஆனால் 'மியூசிக் அகாடமி' என்று குறிப்பிடப்படும் சங்கீத வித்வத் சபையின் விருதுக்குத் தனி மதிப்பு உண்டு. ஒரு ஸங்கீத வித்வானின் வாழ்க்கையில், தன் தொழிலுக்கும், திறமைக்கும் கிடைக்கும் அங்கீகாரமாக அதை ஏற்றுப் பெருமை கொள்ளச் செய்யும் விருது அது. ஏனென்றால் 'மியூசிக் அகாடமி'. இந்தியக் கலாசாரத்தின் முக்கிய அம்சமான இசையைப் பேணிக் காக்கும் பாதுகாவலரின் நிலையில் இருக்கிறது. அப்படிப்பட்ட உன்னதமான நிறுவனத்தின் அரங்கில், எல்லையில்லாத நன்றியுணர்வோடும், மிகுந்த பணிவோடும் உங்கள் முன் நிற்கிறேன் நான்.

சங்கீத பரம்பரை

தியாகராஜரின் சிஷ்ய பரம்பரையைச் சேர்ந்தவன் என்று நான் உண்மையிலேயே

பெருமைப்படுகிறேன். ஆமாம். தியாகராஜரின் சிஷ்ய பரம்பரையில் மூன்றாவதாக வந்த உமையாள்புரம் ஸ்ரீ சுவாமிநாத அய்யர் அவர்களுடைய மேதா விலாசத்தையும், தியாகராஜர் கீர்த்தனைகளை அவர் பாடிப் பரப்பிய பணியையும் போற்றிப் பாராட்டும் வகையில் 1936 ல் அவருக்கு 'சங்கீத கலாநிதி' விருது வழங்கிப் பெருமைப்படுத்தியது 'மியூசிக் அகாடமி'. அவருடைய சிஷ்யரும், எனது குருவும், அருமை தகப்பனருமான மகாராஜபுரம் விசுவநாதய்யர், தமது திறமையால் மின்னல் வேகத்தில் உச்சநிலை அடைந்து, ஸங்கீத உலகில் உன்னத ஸ்தானம் வகிக்கக் காரணமே, அவர் உமையாள்புரம் ஸ்ரீ சுவாமிநாதய்யரிடம் செய்த குருகுல வாசம்தான். என் தகப்பனுக்கு 1945 ல் 'சங்கீத கலாநிதி' விருது வழங்கிச் சிறப்பித்தது வித்வத் சபை. என் தகப்பனுக்கு விருது கிடைத்து கிட்டத்தட்ட நாற்பத்தைந்து வருடங்களுக்குப் பிறகு, அவர்களின் அடிச்சுவட்டில் தடம்பதித்து வந்த நான், இப்போது விருதுபெற உங்கள் முன் மிகுந்த அடக்கத்துடன் நிற்கிறேன்.

இசை உலகில் தனிச் சிறப்புடன், கலைஞரின் கலைஞனாக, கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்தின் சிகரமாக, எண்பது வயதிலும் குறைவில்லாது பாடி, நம்மை எல்லாம் மகிழ்விக்கிற பெரியவர், திரு. செம்மங்குடி சீனிவாசய்யர் அவர் எனது தகப்பனரின் பிரதம சீடர்.

அந்த சிஷ்யத் தன்மை காரணமாக, எனது குருவாகவும் உடன் பிறவா தமையனாராகவும் விளங்கி வரும் 'சங்கீத கலாநிதி' திரு. செம்மங்குடி சீனிவாசய்யர் அவர்களுக்கு நான் தலை வணங்குகிறேன். எனது கருத்துக்களை அலங்காரம் ஏதுமின்றி தாழ்மையுடன் சமர்ப்பிக்கிறேன்.

அகாடமியின் செயல்கள் அன்று முதல் இன்று வரை எந்தப் பாகுபாடும் இல்லாமல், தகுதிக்கு முக்கியத்துவம் கொடுத்து வந்திருப்பதால், அதன் மூலம் இன்று பிரபல மடைந்த வித்வான்கள் பலர் இருப்பதைப் பார்க்கலாம், எந்தெந்தச் சமயத்தில் செய்ய வேண்டுமோ, அந்தந்தச் சமயத்தில் வித்வத்துக்கு மதிப்புக் கொடுத்து வந்திருக்கிறது 'மியூசிக் அகாடமி'. உதாரணமாக நான் என்னையே இங்கு குறிப்பிடுகிறேன்.

மூன்று மணிக் கச்சேரி—முதலில், பிறகு எட்டு மணி. அதன் பிறகு ஐந்து மணி. இப்போது 'சங்கீத கலாநிதி' விருது பெறும் வாய்ப்புடன் மகாநாட்டுக்குத் தலைமை தாங்கும் பொறுப்பு.

கலையும் கலைஞரும்

ஸ்தாபனங்கள் தனி மனிதரைப் போல் இல்லாமல் வேறுபட்டு இருக்கின்றன என்று சொல்ல வேண்டும். ஒரு கலைஞனை ஸ்தாபனம்தான் வளர்க்கிறது, தனி மனிதர் அல்ல. கலைஞனும் ஸ்தாபனத்தினுல்தான் சுடர் விட்டுப் பிரகாசிக்கிறான்.

கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்துக்கு இலக்கணம் தேவை. ஆனால் இலக்கணமே இசை ஆகி விடாது. கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்துக்குச் சம்பிரதாயம் என்று ஒன்று உண்டு. இலக்கியத்தையும் அத்தோடு சேர்த்துக்கொள்ளலாம். ஆனால் இலக்கியத்தை மட்டுமே வைத்துக் கொண்டு இசைக்கு நியாயம் செய்துவிட முடியாது. இசையின் இலக்கணம், இலக்கியம் இரண்டையும் உணர்ந்திருப்பதோடு,

சங்கீத ரசிகர்களின் நாடியும் கலைஞனின் கையில் இருக்கவேண்டும்.

இதற்கு முன் பல சங்கீத மேதைகள் 'சங்கீத கலாநிதி' யாக இருந்து வந்திருக்கிறார்கள். இசையின் இலக்கணத்தைத் தெரித்துகொண்டு, அவர்கள் இசைத்துறைக்கு வரவில்லை. இசை தெரிந்த பின்னர், இலக்கணமும் அவர்களுக்கு இயல்பாகவே வந்தது, அதற்கு முக்கியக் காரணம். அவர்கள் குருநாதர்களுடைய மேதா விலாசத்துடன் சேர்ந்த இசையைக் கேட்டுக் கேட்டு, சம்பிரதாயமும் இலக்கண இலக்கியமும் அவர்கள் இரத்தத்திலேயே ஊறி வந்திருக்கின்றன. சாஸ்திரோக்தமான சங்கீதத்தையும் இனிமை, மென்மை, பாடுகிற முறை, அழகு இவற்றின் மூலம் வழங்கினால் ஆழ்ந்த, உயர்ந்த, ரசனைமிக்க ரசிகர்களை உருவாக்க முடியும். ஆக, ரசிகர் குழாம் உருவாக்குவது நம் கையில்தான் இருக்கிறது.

ஒரு கலைஞனின் வெற்றி ஒரு அரண்மனை போன்றது, சம்பிரதாயம் அதன் அஸ்திவாரம். புரந்தரதாசர், மும்மூர்த்திகள், பாபநாசம் சிவன், கோபாலகிருஷ்ண பாரதி போன்ற வாக்கேயகாரர்களின் கிருதிகள் அதன் தூண்கள். தெய்வீகம், பக்தி, ஆன்மீகம் இவை அதன் பூஜை அறை. ஜனரஞ்சகம் என்பது அரண்மனையிலுள்ள நந்தவனம். இலக்கணம் அரண்மனையைப் பாதுகாக்கும் அரண். இவைகள் ஒருங்கே சேர்ந்ததுதான் கர்நாடக சங்கீதம்.

நல்ல சங்கீதத்துக்கு விளம்பரம் தேவை இல்லை. அதற்கு உதாரணமாக, இன்றைய பிறவி மேதைகளைக் குறிப்பிடலாம். இவர்கள் இசை வழங்கும் அரங்குகள் நிறைந்து வழிவதை மகிழ்வுடன் சொல்லுகிறேன். நல்ல இசை ரசிகர்களை உண்மையில் ஈர்க்கிறது.

நமது கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்தில் வெறும் இசை மட்டுமே பிரதானம் அல்ல. ஆன்மீகமும், தெய்வீகமும் இதில் பின்னிப் பிணைந்திருப்பதால்தான், கர்நாடக இசை வாழ்க்கையோடு இணைந்த ஜீவனுள்ள இசையாகக் காலம் காலமாக இருந்து வருகிறது.

இன்றைய மறுமலர்ச்சி

இப்போதைய கர்நாடக இசையின் நிலையை ஆராய்ந்து பார்த்தோமானால், இளைஞர்களின் பங்கு மிகுந்த முக்கியத்துவம் பெற்றிருக்கிறது. அவர்களிடம் சுருதி, லயம் எல்லாம் அமைந்திருப்பதோடு, ஏராளமான கீர்த்தனைகளை அவர்கள் அறிந்து வைத்திருக்கிறார்கள். அதனால் கர்நாடக இசை மறுமலர்ச்சி பெற்று உயிர்த் துடிப்புடன் வெளிக்கிளம்பியிருப்பது மட்டுமல்ல, இசையுலகில் புரட்சிகரமாகவும் இவர்கள் இயங்குகிறார்கள். இந்த நிலை எப்படி வந்தது? திடீரென்று கிளம்பவில்லை என்பது உண்மை. முற்காலத்தில் வாழ்ந்தவர்கள், இசையில் இளைஞர்கள் ஈடுபடுவதை விரும்பி வரவேற்று உற்சாகப்படுத்தவில்லை. கலையை ஊக்குவிப்பதற்குப் பதிலாக, லோகாயதமான வாழ்க்கைப் பற்றி கவலைப்பட்டார்கள். இப்படி இருந்தும் இந்தத் தளைகளிலிருந்தும், கட்டுப்பாடுகளிலிருந்தும் ஊற்றுகக் கிளம்பிப் பீறிட்டுக் கொண்டு வந்த பிறவி மேதைகள், அன்றும் ஒருசிலர் இருந்தனர். இன்றும் சிலரைப் பார்க்கிறோம். இப்போது கிளம்பியிருக்கிற பிறவி மேதைகள் வெளிப்படுத்தும் திறன் அவர்கள் பெற்றுள்ள புகழ், இங்கேயுள்ள இளம் தலைமுறையினரை ஈர்க்கிறது. அவர்களும் பங்குகொள்ள வேண்டும் என்ற ஈடுபாட்டுடன் முன் வந்திருப்பது, கர்நாடக இசையின் எதிர்காலத்தின் மீது நம்பிக்கைக் கொள்ள வைக்கிறது. இந்தப்

பின்னணியில், அக்காலத்தையும் இக்காலத்தையும் ஒப்பிட்டுப் பார்த்தால் அக்காலத்தில் இசைக் கலைக்குப் பெற்றோரிடம் ஆதரவு இருக்கவில்லை, அதனால் ஒரு சிலரே முன்னுக்கு வரமுடிந்தது. இக்காலத்தில் பிறவி மேதைகள் தோன்றி வளர்ந்து இளம் வயதினரைக் கவர்ந்துவிட்டார்கள், அவர்களுக்குப் பெற்றோரின் ஆதரவும் சபைகளின் ஆதரவும் கிடைத்திருப்பது மகிழ்ச்சிக்கூரிய விஷயம். இந்த நிலை தொடர வேண்டும்.

அதிர்ஷ்டவசமாக, அநேக நிறுவனங்களில் உள்ள பல அதிகாரிகள் அல்லது நிர்வாகிகள், கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்தில் உள்ள ஆர்வம், ஈடுபாடு காரணமாக, தங்கள் நிறுவனத்தின் மூலம் இசைக்கு ஆதரவு கொடுக்க சபைகளைப் பயன்படுத்துகிறார்கள். இந்த அரிய சலுகையைப் பயன்படுத்தி, வளரும், வளர்ந்துகொண்டிருக்கும், வளர்ந்துவிட்ட, இசைக் கலைஞர்களுக்கு அகாடமி போன்ற ஸ்தாபனங்கள், இவர்கள் முன்னேறுவதற்காக உதவுவதில் இமாலய சாதனைகளே செய்திருக்கிறார்கள் என்றால் அது சற்றும் மிகையே அல்ல. இத்தப் பணி தொடர்ந்தால் இசையுலகம் மேலும் பிரகாசமடையும். இதற்கு முக்கியமாக அரசாங்கமும் நிறுவனங்களுக்கு உரிய அனுமதி வழங்கி கலை வளர உதவ வேண்டும்.

சங்கீத வித்வத் சபை போன்ற மாபெரும் ஸ்தாபனங்கள், அலைமோதும் ரஸிகர்கள் கூடுகின்ற டிசம்பர் இசை விழாவில் முழுதும் வளரும்/வளர்ந்து கொண்டிருக்கும்/வளர்ந்துவிட்ட இளம் தலைமுறையினர்களுக்கு சந்தர்ப்பங்கள் கொடுத்து ரஸிகர்களுக்கு அறிமுகப்படுத்தி வருங்கால இசை வாரிசுகளாக உருவாக்க வேண்டும் என்பது என் தாழ்மையான வேண்டுகோள்.

“ஷண்முக தரிசனம்”

அன்புடையீர் !

தங்களது ஜனவரி 1990 “ஷண்முகா” இதழ் ஒன்று கிடைத்தது. இந்த ஷண்முக தரிசனத்தில் உதித்த கதிர்கள் பல. அனைத்தும் அற்புதமான வகையில் பிரகாசித்தது. இருப்பினும், திருமதி ராஜி நாராயண் அவர்கள் “அம்புஜம் சித்தி” பற்றி எழுதிய கட்டுரை அனைத்துக்கும் சிகரம் வைந்தாற்போல் பட்டொளி வீசி பறந்ததெனில் மிகையாகாது. இன்றைய சூழ்நிலையில் சுய அனுபவத்தைப் படிக்கும்போது தான் அனைவருக்கும் ஒரு ஆன்மீக உணர்ச்சியும் ஆழ்ந்த நம்பிக்கையும் ஏற்படுகிறது. திருமதி அம்புஜம் கிருஷ்ண யார்? எப்படி ‘டி வி எஸ்’ பரம்பரையில் வந்து சேர்ந்தார்? எப்படி வாக்கேயக்காரர் ஆனார்? தனக்கு அவர்களுடன் ஏற்பட்ட தொடர்பு, தனக்கெனவே ‘சித்தி’ இயற்றியப் பாடல்கள், அவருடைய பரிபூரண ஆசியால் தான் இயற்றிய “நிருத்திய கீதமாலா”, இப்படி மிகவும் கோர்வையாக, அவருடைய வாழ்க்கையையே நம் கண் முன்னால் கொண்டு வந்து நிறுத்திவிட்ட திருமதி ராஜி நாராயண் அவர்களுக்கு பரிபூரண பாராட்டுக்கள்.

சென்னை

கௌரி ராஜகோபால்

A BOUQUET & A BRICKBAT

I have been reading your Quarterly, though not regularly for quite a few years now, for obvious reasons.

Kindly accept my hearty congratulations on the excellent standard you are able to maintain.

It has been mentioned in the review of Pollachi Tamil Isai Sangam's 18th Annual Festival Souvenir, Dec. 1988 (vide SHANMUKHA, Jan. 1990) :

“... மேலும் தஞ்சை இரகுநாத நாயக்கன் அரசவையில் இசை நாட்டிய மரபுகளைப் பற்றி டாக்டர் முட்நூரி சங்கமேசம் அவர்களின் தெலுங்குக் கட்டுரையின் தமிழாக்கம் வாசகர்களின் கலை ஆர்வத்தைத் தூண்டுகிறது....”

கட்டுரையின் கடைசிப் பக்கத்தின் அடிப்பகுதியில் ‘ஆசிரியரின் ஆங்கிலக் கட்டுரையிலிருந்து தமிழில் மொழி பெயர்த்தவர் ...’ என்று கண்டிருக்கும்போது இது எப்படி நேர்ந்தது?

“Fear or Surprise?” — *Bhavanutha* (Mohanam) by Sri P. K. Srinivasan is timely. For some inexplicable reasons, some musicians sing without understanding the mood contemplated by the composer. This is more evident when songs of composers who have not left behind a parampara of disciples are set to music, sometimes in Ragas which convey quite a contrary mood!

Tirupati

A. Natarajan
(Secretary, Tirupati
Cultural Association)

(தவறைச் சுட்டிக் காட்டியதற்கு நன்றி. தவறு நேர்ந்ததற்கு வருந்துகிறோம்.
— ஆசிரியர்)